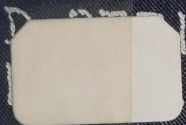


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· ETERNAL LIFE ·



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By CAROLINE C. LEIGHTON

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A Sketch of the Life of Frederick Amiel.

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LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS BOSTON

INTIMATIONS
OF
ETERNAL LIFE

BY

CAROLINE C. LEIGHTON

AUTHOR OF "LIFE AT PUGET SOUND" "A SWISS THOREAU" ETC.

*Not wholly told
Yet not left wholly untold*

BOSTON
LEE AND SHEPARD 10 MILK STREET
1891

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INTIMATIONS OF ETERNAL LIFE

S. J. PARKHILL & CO., PRINTERS
BOSTON

PREFACE

I HAVE had an unusual experience. It is this: After twenty years' separation from schools, churches, and libraries, to return to a centre of thought. What most impressed me in matters of chief interest to me was to recognize the doubtful, questioning spirit, that, since the time of my own religious instruction, had crept in among sacred things. I felt deeply the necessity of ferreting out the cause of it. Must my children's faith be shipwrecked, or might I be able to point out a beacon light or show a safe anchorage?

Should not religious feeling draw new strength from the revelations of science? What is the bearing of the discoveries of the last half century on the probabilities of our future?

This is a subject on which there is much variety of opinion. To elicit something clear and trustworthy from intricate and conflicting statements, has been my endeavor.

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INTRODUCTION

MISS FRANCES POWER COBBE, in an article called "The Hopes of the Human Race Here and Hereafter," speaks of the presumptions against life after death as being so great as to make the fact of immortality improbable. She rests her own belief in it on moral grounds, on the thirst of the whole human race for justice, which cannot be satisfied in this life.

It is in regard to the presumptions against survival that I would call attention to her arguments.

In the first place, she says, everything we have seen of a man perishes, or passes into other organic or inorganic forms. But did we not always know, even while he was with us, that there was something in him we could not see, but which was equally real with any thing recognized by our senses?

In the second place, she says, "We find no foot-hold for even a conjecture of *how* he is transported to his new abode, nor of *where* in the astro-universe that can be." Because we are ourselves unable to form a conjecture as to how a thing can be done is certainly no evidence that it cannot be accomplished; and we know as much in regard to where we shall be after death as we do in regard to where we were before we came to this world, and also as much in regard to the manner of conveyance.

Third, "What can be the conditions of existence and consciousness without a brain or a single one of our senses?" Exactly what the conditions of existence must be under those circumstances, of course we cannot declare; but she herself elsewhere suggests that it may be the soul is no more identifiable with the brain than the organist with his organ, and that it may have many powers undisclosed, while it is still wrapped in the sheath of the body, as Leibnitz believed, he insisting that the soul is necessarily always clothed with a material body, more or less rarefied, and that when it escapes from its pres-

ent body its new organs of consciousness will be disclosed to it.

Fourth, "The fact that injuries to the brain in this life cloud a man's mind and distort his will presses severely against the assumption that the entire dissolution of that brain will leave intellect and volition perfect and free."

The theory that the brain is an *instrument* only, as was so clearly demonstrated by the late Dr. Draper, destroys the force of this argument. The mind, however clear and free, can no more work with impaired apparatus than the hand can with an injured tool.

While a man is on earth he is so situated that he can communicate only through brain and senses. We know nothing of whether he will need them when he is differently situated, as it is evident that, in some respects, he will be after death. That which operated in the brain and communicated through the senses is gone where He who devised for it these instruments may provide it with others better adapted to its purpose.

Fifth, "If man be immortal, he must have

become an immortal being at some point of his development. [The evolution theory saddles us with a new difficulty.] At what point between the ascidian and the sage did the mortal creature give birth to an heir to immortality?"

Here she assumes that no creature below man could possibly be dreamed of as immortal. The Kamtchatdales believe that even a fly is immortal; and from some remarks made by Agassiz in his "Introduction to the Study of Classification," one might be justified in supposing that he held somewhat the same idea. In his "Contributions to the Natural History of the United States," he remarks that "there exists as much individuality among animals within their respective capabilities as among men; and this fact argues strongly in favor of the existence in every animal of an immaterial principle, similar to that which by its excellence and superiority raises man so much above animals. Most of the arguments of philosophy in favor of the immortality of man apply equally well to the permanency of this principle in other living beings."

Wesley thought that in the next life animals

would improve upon what they were on earth, "losing," he says, "the horridness of their appearance, and developing in their minds."

Professor Jevons, in "The Principles of Science," declares: "That materialism must be the coming religion, is the secret fear which the constant advance of scientific investigation excites in many minds. . . . Can we any longer hold that mind is distinct from matter? Is spirit a mere name for the more curious manifestations of material energy?"

In speaking of the progress of materialism, Professor Huxley says, in "The Physical Basis of Life," "The consciousness of this great truth weighs like a nightmare, I believe, upon many of the best minds of these days." And what is materialism? Scientific investigations are every day more and more plainly revealing to us that matter is only a manifestation of spirit. According to the popular idea the materialists must declare: "I believe in the manifestation, but not in that which manifests." The dreaded materialism seems to resolve itself into a harmless

question whether or not matter is in the first place, endowed with powers, which, gradually unfolding, culminate in spirit; whether its Creator has so infused His own life into it that it needs afterward no interference from without.

Professor Huxley expresses his own view, that it makes little difference whether we express the phenomena of matter in terms of spirit, or the phenomena of spirit in terms of matter. "Materialism," he says, "means that all the phenomena of nature are resolvable into mechanism. But we know of no mechanism without a cause behind it." In connection with this definition he quotes Berkeley's answer to the materialists: "You tell me that all the phenomena of nature are resolvable into matter and its affections. I assent to your statement, and put to you the further question, 'What is matter?'" He declares that "the great truth that Berkeley discovered was that the honest and vigorous following up of the argument which leads us to materialism inevitably carries us beyond it." In Berkeley's own words: "The same principles which at first view lead to scepticism, pursued

to a certain point bring men back to common sense."

Richard Acland Armstrong, a minister of the Free Religious Church, in a sermon on "Man's Knowledge of God," published in Liverpool in 1886, after speaking of the multitudes of the best minds of Europe at the present day enthusiastically engaged in the pursuit of physical science, remarks that their ranks have given many an able champion to agnosticism. Astronomers are excepted from this statement. "Their great names, Kepler, Galileo, Newton, Herschel, stand," he says, "for belief in God." He thinks it may be because they are occupied with what is comparatively permanent, whereas physiologists, for instance, deal with what is evanescent and of a perishable nature. But the great lesson physiologists learn is that everything changes, but nothing perishes. The latest researches in astronomy reveal to us similar changes in the heavens, in the consolidation of nebulæ and the disappearance of heavenly bodies. Birth, growth, and death are as plainly to be read in the sky as upon earth.

The progress of physical science, he thinks, tells, for the time, against the natural trust of men in spiritual realities. How can this be, when all his researches must impress him with the mystery of matter? He sees the seeming dead become alive, sees the visible become invisible and yet satisfy him by tests, or by its re-appearance, that it survived the change. The most essential lesson, according to his view, which the student of physical science has to learn, "is that the evidence of the senses is to be for him ultimate."

Tyndall says, "It is not, as some think, the function of science to divest the universe of its wonder and mystery, but to point out the wonder and mystery of common things." In a lecture to the working-men of Dundee, September 5, 1867, he says, "The mind of man has the power of penetrating far beyond the boundaries of his five senses. The things which are seen in the material world depend for their action upon things unseen." Is light less real than the glass through which it passes, electricity less real than the iron bar it traverses?

There are numerous processes in nature that entirely elude the eye of the body, and must be figured by the eye of the mind. The ablest of scientific scholars make no pretence at having reached more than a very little way toward a comprehension of natural operations and of the intelligence that directs them.

“Our reasoning faculties,” says Max Müller, “break down completely before all problems concerning the origin of things. . . . Trace man back to a primeval cell ; the primeval cell that could become a man is more mysterious by far than the man that was evolved from it. . . . Trace back the solar system to a rotating nebula ; the nebula which by evolution and revolution could become an inhabitable universe is again far more mysterious than the universe itself.”

This great alarm concerning the influence of science seems to arise from a misapprehension in regard to what it claims. It is misunderstood chiefly on three points,—the existence of God, the reality of the soul and its independence of the physical brain, and consequently its survival of the separation from it.

In regard to the first point, it is continually affirmed that the evolution hypothesis dispenses with the idea of a God. Agassiz rejected it on this ground. Evolution suggests that all the progress in the world has resulted from the action of certain laws of selective affinity with the survival of the fittest. It implies that an impulse to change was originally implanted in matter; but with regard to who implanted the impulse to change, or who created the matter, it says nothing. It relates to a method only which implies that more capacity for change is latent in organic forms than was before supposed, and the new views of matter afford a good basis for it. It aims only to show how development proceeds, revealing to us the working of a distinct plan, implying intelligence. It is also a beneficent plan implying kindness, as well as wisdom, in its Originator.

In regard to thought's being dependent on molecular action in the brain, Du Bois Reymond, in a lecture "On the Limits of the Knowledge of Nature," says, "If it should prove possible at some future time to obtain a complete knowledge

of all the processes of the brain, the insight into the material conditions of intellectual action would edify us more than any scientific discovery ever made. It would be a lofty triumph, if one could say that in a particular intellectual process, a particular movement of particular atoms took place, in particular ganglionic centres and nervous tubes ; but the intellectual processes themselves would be just as incomprehensible as now."

It was once believed that the production of certain chemical compounds could only be effected by some inexplicable vital power. Does it lessen our reverence for the "One Sole Cause of Things," to learn that the chemist can produce now in his laboratory many substances until recently supposed to be the product of life only?

If Professor Bastian discovers the conditions under which life is evolved, and, taking an organic compound, composed of the elements of protoplasm, he should in exposing it to those conditions find it begin to fashion itself into cells, could he be called the originator of life? Do I make the rose grow when I place it in

the sunshine, furnish it with proper food, and arrange all its circumstances so that they shall be favorable to growth?

Emile de Lavellye, in a recent article in the *Contemporary Review* on "The Future of Religion," declares that religion is at present subjected to a very severe ordeal, and seems to doubt if it will survive the undermining influence of the natural sciences. "The author of 'The Origin of Species,'" he says, "in assimilating man to animals, seems to withhold from him a soul;" attributing this fatal result to Darwin, who has done so much to detect and reveal the intelligence even of worms, and the approach to it in plants, suggesting a soul in all nature, rather than denying it to any creature.

Miss Cobbe, writing on "The Scientific Spirit of the Age," repeatedly refers to "the anti-religious tendency of modern science," and attributes to Darwin's influence decay of the belief in things unseen; declaring that of all improbable things to anticipate now, is a "scientific religious reformation." Why should we not anticipate it? Great discoveries in the

physical world ought naturally to give us clearer ideas of its Creator. Or is it upon ignorance, rather than upon knowledge, that religious faith rests?

It is strange to turn from liberal thinkers to the ancient formalized Catholic Church for a hospitable reception to new ideas; but in a recent number of the *Dublin Review*, one of the Catholic Fathers, whose opinion is much regarded in the Church, declares that the priesthood of science threatens to supersede all other priesthoods; that the last word in regard to the origin and meaning of things rests with the professors of physics; and informs the young priests under his supervision that the Church will regard with favor the study of biology, physical science being founded upon the idea that this world is neither a chaos nor a Bedlam, but becomes as we study it ever more and more intelligible.

“In 1873 the students of the Catholic University of Ireland addressed a memorial to the University Board, stating that they had not a single professor of physical science, ‘although

within the last fifty years the natural sciences have become the chief study of the world. Scarce a year now passes,' they said, 'without some discovery's being made in these sciences, which, as with the touch of the magician's wand, shivers to atoms theories formerly deemed unassailable. It is through the physical sciences that the fiercest assaults are now made on our religion. No more deadly weapon is used against our faith than the facts incontestably proved by modern researches in science.' They also declared that if no professor was provided to point out to them the difference between established facts and erroneous inferences, they should be forced to devour the works of Haeckel, Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, and Lyell, in the solitude of their own homes, without the help of any authority to refer to in their difficulties. The Church with its usual practical wisdom hereupon established the college at Kensington." ¹

The present Pope in an Encyclical Letter speaks of his eager desire to reinstate and propa-

¹ Tyndall's *Fragments of Science*.

gate far and wide the golden wisdom of Aquinas, for the safety and glory of the Catholic faith, the advantage of society, and the advancement of all the sciences; St. Thomas holding very much the same ideas as Tyndall in regard to the powers latent in matter, its ability to assume new forms, and to become spiritualized.

“Physical science has of late years assumed a momentous position in the world. It has produced, and is destined to produce, immense changes in the popular conception of the origin, rule, and governance of natural things.”¹

More than two hundred years ago Pascal wrote: “I know not who has sent me into the world, nor what the world is, nor what I am. I am terribly ignorant of everything. I know not what my body is, nor my senses, nor my soul, nor even that part of me which thinks what I say, which reflects on all and on itself, yet is as ignorant of itself as of all beside. I see those dreadful spaces of the universe which close me in, and I find myself chained in one corner of the vast expanse without knowing why I am set

¹ Fragments of Science.

in this place rather than elsewhere, or why this moment of time given me for life is assigned to this point rather than another of the whole eternity which was before me or which shall come after me. I see nothing but infinities on every side, which close me round as an atom, and as a shadow which endures but for an instant and returns no more.

“I know only that I must shortly die, but what I know the least is this very death which I cannot avoid.”

Many of these words are as true to-day as they were when uttered; yet we have more knowledge of the world, have learned something of the working of natural and divine laws, and ought from reflection upon them to be able to form a little more of an idea of the future course of our lives even after death.

Tyndall says, “After many trials it has become evident that man’s capacities are, so to speak, the complement of nature’s facts, and that within certain limits the secret of the universe is open to the human understanding.”

In the same spirit Agassiz speaks of scientific

systems as translations into human language of the thoughts of the Creator. "That the human mind is adapted to interpret these thoughts, shows its affinity with the Mind that conceived them. It is permitted, *intended*, that the human mind shall commune with the Mind from which it sprang."

A curious fact has been revealed in the study of animal tissues, which seems to confirm this idea, that it was *intended* we should penetrate some of nature's mysteries, and that even where it at first appears impossible to learn anything, patient, repeated efforts are finally rewarded. A thin piece of fresh animal tissue when examined by the microscope appears nearly homogeneous, so that no identification of its different structures would be possible, if it had not been for the discovery that these different structures differ in chemical constitution, and a special chemical substance may affect one and leave another untouched.

It is accordingly prepared for examination by subjecting it to the action of several different chemicals. Carmine, for instance, stains only

the connective tissue and the nuclei within the cells. It has no affinity for what is called dead or formed matter. It leaves the muscle unaffected; but a weak solution of acetic acid followed by safranine colors the muscle and the epithelium; and finally, blood-vessels, nerve threads and cells, muscular fibre, and connective tissues are all as distinctly marked as if some delicate pencil had defined them.

After it was discovered that life, traced back to its simplest form, seemed to originate in an apparently structureless, colorless, jellylike matter (protoplasm), eager investigators analyzed it and combined its constituents so skillfully that the most delicate tests revealed no difference between the artificially and the naturally produced matter, yet life was wanting. In something beyond chemistry lay that secret; but the discovery was made, in the course of experiments, that the protoplasmic matter of the lowest fungus is identical with that of the brain of man, — a little side-light cast on the evolution hypothesis.

INTIMATIONS OF ETERNAL LIFE

I

THE REALITY OF THINGS UNSEEN

POSITIVE science is often slightly regarded as a foe to all things spiritual, yet how many of the discoveries of modern times impress upon us the reality of things unseen !

We cannot believe in spirit, because we cannot see it ; there are many other things that we cannot see, and yet know to exist. Only a little more than a hundred years ago, gases, now so familiarly dealt with, became known to us. But after being separated from their compounds, and their existence revealed, they remained still invisible for a long time.

In 1754 Dr. Black, a young Scotch physician, discovered carbonic acid gas. Somewhat later Cavendish discovered what he called inflamma-

ble air (hydrogen). In 1774 Priestley discovered oxygen, which surprised him, as he said, more than he could well express.

Most of these invisible substances have now revealed themselves in solid or liquid form. Many solids can be vaporized and rendered invisible, even iron assuming that light and elusive condition, and the most refractory metals yielding to the action of the electric current.

The late Professor Jevons fully believed that, if experiments could be made under adequate pressure, every solid could be forced to pass by insensible degrees into the state of a liquid, and subsequently into that of a gas.

In invisible and impalpable form, what now seems most real might escape us as effectually as does spirit.

To early philosophers, light and heat were very subtle kinds of matter. They are now recognized as motion only, but they are none the less real for that.

It has long been known that invisible rays exist beyond the apparent spectrum into which all white light can be resolved. They made themselves known by their chemical or their

heating effects, but were never seen until it entered into the mind of an ingenious chemist to pass the ultra-violet rays through an infusion which would lower their rate of vibration, and to pass the ultra-red rays through something which would break up the long slow waves and adapt them to our vision. They were there, but we were not in a condition to see them.

Tyndall's studies of the phenomena of radiant heat reveal the unseen as more powerful than the seen. "Every gush of dazzling light has associated with it a gush of invisible radiant heat that far transcends the light in energy. . . . We say, 'The sunshine melts the snow.' The sunshine does only a small part of the work. It is chiefly accomplished by dark rays that reveal themselves only in their action." ¹

Astronomers assure us that we receive much more light from the vast number of invisible stars than from those we see.

The Rev. Isaac Taylor, in "The Physical Theory of Another Life," speaking of the possibility of there being rational and sentient powers near us but unrevealed, illustrates his

¹ Fragments of Science.

idea by the fact that it was only by the accidental balancing of a needle exposed to magnetic influence that its directive power was discovered. Other powerful agencies may be in operation around us, of which we have no perception.

When Professor Bell in experimenting placed the telephone in circuit with a telegraph wire, he heard the most extraordinary sounds as if the instrument were talking to itself. Some of them he traced to earth-currents, some to the effect of the aurora borealis, others came he knew not whence.

Physical experiment shows that peculiar circumstances most carefully arranged are often needed for manifestations; but the phenomena are no less trustworthy because under other conditions they fail to appear. On some surfaces a shadow, which seemed only to pass in the most fugitive manner, can be restored after a long interval. Dr. Draper experimented much with phantom shadows. One of his experiments was to lay a coin on some cold polished metal, breathe on the metal, and after the moisture had evaporated throw off the coin. The most critical examination could discover no

trace of its form. He put it aside, sometimes for months; and on breathing over it again, the shadowy form would emerge, showing the permanence of what seemed most transitory.

Another of his experiments in the evolution of old shadows was to lay a key on a sensitive phosphorescent surface exposed to electrical action. After taking off the key he put the plate away in the dark. On taking it out some time afterward, and laying a ring over the place where he had laid the key, he found that several latent images could co-exist and remain perfectly distinct from each other, and that when he subjected the plate again to electrical action, the form of the key first appeared and then faded away, giving place to the ring.

Photography is a great revealer of hidden things. Who knows what else there may be about us of which we are as unconscious as we were of the slumbering image on the sensitive plate, before Daguerre's ingenuity disclosed it? Pictures not yet made manifest, no doubt are ceaselessly forming about us, awaiting developments, since chemistry reveals the fact that a sunbeam cannot rest for an instant upon

any substance without altering it in some respect.

Great use is made to-day of photography in criminal investigations. All alterations and interpolations in documents betray themselves; the slightest difference in the shade of inks, which escapes all other tests, becomes evident. Many things exist unsuspected until the means for making them evident come to hand. Our unaided senses could not discover them. Dr. Draper predicted that the time would come when we should photograph what we could not see. Lo! it is here. At Paris and at Cambridge, photographs have been taken of stars never revealed by the telescope, and faint nebulæ, whose existence had not been suspected, have announced themselves in this manner.

The bolometer, that delicate piece of apparatus for measuring heat, detects viewless rays in the sun's spectrum, where the keenest eye sees no light and the best thermometer detects no heat. It recognizes shadows by their intercepting heat. Professor Langley speaks of a shadow revealed in this way at a distance of ninety-two millions of miles, as "the ghost of a ghost."

Very delicate detective agencies of many kinds are in operation about us, of which we have only lately become aware. By the microphone the faintest sounds become audible. The spectro-scope shows whether the light radiated by any body is inherent or borrowed. It can plainly point out the "blood band" in an old stain, impossible in any other way to identify. The searching ray of polarized light reveals a want of homogeneity of structure, which no chemical tests could discover.

All study of nature points to hidden powers disclosed only in their action. Science is continually opening our eyes to new manifestations of spirit. It accustoms us to the idea that things may exist without making themselves known to any of our senses. It accustoms us also to mysteries and to paradoxical phenomena.

The existence even of the air is still unsuspected by the untaught mind. It was not conjectured, until revealed by science, that our apparently stable earth was rushing through space with a speed of eighteen miles a second, and turning about on its axis at a rate of one thousand miles an hour. "When Nicolaus

Copernicus first called upon the world to accept this statement as a fact, although unverifiable by the senses, many philosophers refused to do such violence to their intuitions, and for many years held to their old beliefs."

We are now asked to accept a new idea in respect to matter, which is even more startling. It is that of the incessant molecular motion present in the most solid and the most apparently inert substances. Certain kinds of matter appear to us cold and dead. It is a lesson of science, that nothing is either cold or dead. Everywhere is motion, and everywhere a certain degree of heat. Even a piece of ice at a temperature of zero, taken into a room where the temperature is below zero, will radiate heat, and heat is motion in changed form.

The old distinctions of matter into solid, liquid, and gaseous, are obliterated; the same substance appearing sometimes in solid, sometimes in gaseous form. In the gaseous form, where particles of matter are free to move, they are found to be always in swift, incessant motion. Experiments with solid matter very finely divided and suspended in solution show a con-

stant oscillatory movement, "so marked," says Professor Jevons, "at times as to resemble dancing or skipping." The finest microscope has never revealed any molecular motion in solid matter; but from what occurs when the restraint upon motion is partly removed, we conjecture its tendency, and although nothing could seem more unlikely when it is first stated to us, after we learn the reasons upon which the supposition is based, we accept it as probable, and look upon even a bit of stone or iron with awe, as a repository of an occult truth, and an illustration of life and motion which elude our senses.

II

THE INDESTRUCTIBILITY OF MATTER

“THE casket was lowered into the grave, and the remains of Lucy Webb Hayes were left to await the morning of the resurrection.”

This is the concluding paragraph of an account of the funeral of the wife of the ex-President. The services were conducted by seven ministers, who represented as many different denominations of Christians. Probably no one of them would have demurred at this expression, since it is one so commonly used on like occasions. But do we really believe that the body will remain in the grave, or be miraculously re-formed at that day, and until that time does life pause? This account sounds as if it had been written before any of the scientific discoveries of the last century, in regard to the ceaseless changes of matter, had been made.

If we cannot follow the spirit in its flight, we may follow the changes of the matter that has

been associated with it, and learn from observing them that in nature all death is birth, and that never for one moment does the activity of life cease.

It was formerly believed that matter was sometimes annihilated, that combustion, for instance, was destruction to it; but in the experiments of Dr. Black with the delicate balance of Lavoisier, the great revelation was made, that substances which by burning had seemed to be annihilated had only become invisible and escaped into the air; by securing and weighing them, all the products of combustion added together were found to give the original weight of the undecomposed substance; and the startling discovery was made, that we have no power over matter to destroy it. We can change its form only. The mere mote floating in the sunbeam is imperishable.

Intuition often anticipates the discoveries of science. Long before this test determined it, philosophers had many times declared that matter was in its elements eternal. Democritus asserted it as his belief, that nothing that exists can be destroyed, but that all changes

are due to the combination and separation of atoms.

What we call death is only a changed mode of life. Primitive elements of unorganized matter, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon, pass into vegetable form and rise to animal life. On the death of the animal they pass only into other combinations.

Biologists have experimented a great deal of late years with fibrin, the part of the blood which is most actively alive. The late Dr. Rollin R. Gregg of Buffalo, N. Y., a most devoted and patient microscopist, published just before his death a pamphlet called "The Revelations of Fibrin." The discovery which he made in regard to the impossibility of destroying matter seemed to him so significant in regard to the continued life of the spirit, that he could not leave the earth without announcing it. With a trembling hand, on the last night of his life, he wrote it out. To him the question was answered: "If a man die, shall he live again?"

He had found that the fibrin of all so-called dead organic matter, whether animal or vegetable, under favorable conditions would return

to life, the grains into which it had broken up in decomposing beginning to arrange themselves, generally in meshes, some of them sending out rootlets and forming cells. No matter how long it had been apparently dead, or entirely inactive, subjected for a sufficient length of time to warmth and moisture it returned to active life. Threads were generally first formed. Each granule moved freely about, as if seeking its proper place. Upon finding it, it remained at rest, conducting like the atoms of a crystallizing substance. The first-formed threads seemed to exercise an attractive power upon outside matter, which they drew into their meshes and arranged in various ways.

The elder Professor Silliman gives also the result of his experiments with fibrin as proving that it is indestructible. Professor C. G. Lehmann says, "Pure fibrin is incapable of complete solution. In my experiments I have never been able to destroy it. I still have the first sample of blood that I set aside to decay nine months ago under a heat of one hundred to two hundred degrees all the time. I have specimens of fibrin that has been digesting in chemically

pure nitric acid for six months. The grains of both these specimens still organize readily into threads. I have boiled fibrin many days, baked it for hours, burned it black, triturated it, sifted the powder into pure nitric acid. After all this treatment, its granules were still pure and fresh, ready for new work."

Everywhere is making and unmaking, but nowhere destroying. When the old leaves fall from the trees, a close examination will show us the swelling buds beneath. Their life has passed over into the buds, and they fall because a new growth is ready to take their place.

When the spiritual being has ripened for a new form, that which contains it can be no longer anything but a prison.

III

THE CONVERTIBILITY OF FORCES

IF we suspend two ivory balls from the same point, draw them apart, and let them fall together again, even a child will notice the rebound with which they separate, and if of a questioning nature will wonder whither the force has fled when we substitute for them balls of lead, and after the shock of the concussion they remain at a dead standstill. The force seems to have been destroyed, just as substances once seemed to be in burning ; but the delicate scientific tests of to-day detect it in the one case as well as in the other. It has changed its mode of action only. It is no longer outward and visible, but internal, motion.

Dr. Thomas Hill describes an experiment in which a vibrating tuning-fork is placed upon a piece of caoutchouc ; after a while the sound becomes inaudible, but a fine thermo-electric apparatus shows that the temperature of the

rubber has been raised.¹ Very slight changes in electrical and chemical condition can now be made evident in various ways, so that, when our unaided senses can no longer trace any action, science can often reveal it to us as manifested in some new manner.

Benjamin Thompson, afterward Count Rumford, while superintending the boring of cannon at the foundry in Munich, noticed the heat of the detached fragments of brass, and asking himself the question, "Whence comes this heat?" was finally led by reflection to the conviction that heat is a transformation of motion. The discovery that heat, formerly supposed to be a substance, is in reality a motion only, is one of deep spiritual significance in what it implies, since on it rests the great doctrine of the conservation of energy. It would seem that the generation that has witnessed the confirmation of this hypothesis would not be one to doubt the spirit's continued life, seeing that in changed form all forces continue their work, whatever interfering influences assail them.

The convertibility of forces we see every day

¹ Geometry and Faith.

illustrated, and it has become an axiom of science that energy disappearing at one point is due at another.

In the Bridgewater Treatise of the Rev. William Whewell, the assertion was made, that the atmosphere is the never-failing historian of every word we have ever uttered; that an aërial pulsation once started continues forever in motion. It was afterward demonstrated in the experiments of Uriah Boyden, that the slight amount of friction developed would slowly but constantly operate against its continuance. Must then this impressive argument be abandoned? By the friction, heat is developed. The force we have set in motion, ceasing as sound, has passed into another form. Electrical and chemical changes are produced, and every atom of the atmosphere is affected throughout its whole future by that original impulse.

Edison's device for seizing a mere vibration of the air, preserving it for an indefinite length of time, and finally reproducing it as the sound of the human voice, surpasses in marvellousness Dr. Black's demonstration of the preserved existence of matter that was supposed to have been

annihilated. Science has restored to us what seemed to have been lost both in regard to substance and to force.

As we ponder upon this fact, how can it but awaken within our hearts a daring hope in regard to other appearances that may be misleading? Are the inviolable silence of those who have left us, and the failure of our senses to keep up any cognizance of them, to be regarded as proof of their non-existence?

IV

THE BRAIN

VAGUE impressions that recent scientific discoveries bear unfavorably on the idea of a future life disturb the peace of many intelligent people. Even Ruskin considers that to become interested in the material investigations of recent physical science is to confuse the thoughts and undermine the religious faith.

“The Creed of Science,” issued in London in 1881, by William Graham, affirms that physics, physiology, and natural history, under the light of the Darwinian theory, have all apparently decided against the possibility of a future life. “Man, a mere animal, dies like the brute. Mind, a mere product of an animal organ, or a transformation of physical energy, perishes with the body.” Physics, physiology, and natural history! Natural history, in the light of the Darwinian theory, reveals man as developed from some lower animal. It is therefore asserted

that, being a mere animal, he must perish like a brute. But who knows how far the brute perishes, or how far his rudimentary soul hereafter develops? The most threatening discovery of physics seems to be that of the dissipation of energy, or the death of worlds; but the fact that we are in that way informed that a limit is set to the continuance of our race upon earth obliges us only to put aside the altruistic notion of living in our good deeds, and in the memory of posterity. With the question of individual immortality it has nothing to do, unless it be to render it more probable, as Darwin thought.

The great discovery of physics for the last half-century has been that of the conservation of energy and the convertibility of forces. If physiological investigations should convince us that mental force is dependent on physical and chemical changes in the brain, that "thought is a mode of motion," as Moleschott daringly declared, should not its imperishability be assumed in that very discovery?

Since the revelation of the unity of plan in all nature's working, analogy has seemed a safer

clew to guide us in matters beyond verifying. Believing that we have correlated vital with physical and chemical forces, tempts us to go a step farther, and ask, is not mental force only a higher form of material energy ?

The idea that intellectual action is dependent on physical processes is not a new one. Lucretius taught that mind was material, and that thought originated in the rapid movements of small, round, and perfectly smooth atoms.

“ It was once supposed that mental phenomena were the effects of animal spirits circulating through invisible channels in the nervous substance.” Boerhaave’s theory of thought implied the existence of a very subtle, active fluid in the brain, which he believed to be a secretion from it.

David Hartley of Cambridge, England, more than a hundred years ago suggested that thought was the result of *vibrations* agitating the fine threads of the mystic web of nerves. Hartley was in many respects far in advance of the science of his time. He had surmised the existence of the ether, and defined it as a very subtle,

elastic fluid diffused through the pores of all bodies, and through all of what is considered empty space. He considered that the vibrations causing thought, originate first in this ether within the brain, and are thence communicated to its finer particles ; but the explanation does not touch the vital point.

We are told that light is caused by molecular tremors arising in all light-giving bodies. We can calculate the rate of its motion and trace the effects of interference of the systems of undulations ; but instead of feeling that we understand all about it, the question is always at the last coming back to us, "What starts the tremors?"

To accompany is not necessarily to cause. May not these molecular changes be the *result* of thought, or may it not be that they merely put the brain into a condition favorable to receive thought?

The late Dr. Draper, combating the idea that thought is the product of a peculiar combination of molecules, made a careful examination of the structure of the brain, and says of it, "I find that the cerebrum is absolutely analogous in

construction to any other nervous arc. It is composed of centripetal and centrifugal fibres (having also registering ganglia). If in other nervous arcs the structure is merely automatic, can display no phenomena of itself, but requires the influence of an external agent, — the optical apparatus inert save under the influence of light, the auditory save under the impression of sound, — the cerebrum, being precisely analogous in its elementary structure, presupposes *the existence of some agent to act through it.*"

The materialist says, "I will believe only on the evidence of my senses, what the eye can see, the ear hear, the hand touch." But what is it that looks through the eye, that hears through the ear, and is conscious of the touch? No examination of the eye, the ear, the hand, can find it; therefore the materialist believes in something independent of the body. Can he assert that when the vital energy is no longer able to effect changes in the brain, thought must cease; or can he say merely, *cease to manifest itself through that channel?*

Because the body is no longer able to transmit the messages of the spirit, the spirit is not

necessarily any more affected by it, than I am when the electric line, by which I converse with the world, ceases to act. I could say something still if there were any medium through which to say it.

There is some evidence intimating that not only is a sound condition of the brain not indispensable for thought, but that the spirit may at times become partially independent of its old instrument, even before leaving the body. Dr. Brown-Sequard, according to the *Medical Zeitung*, declares that persons who, in consequence of grave cerebral affections, have been paralyzed for years, have been known to recover, when dying, their sensibility, mobility, and intelligence.

Dr. La Roche, a Philadelphia physician, also published an article a few years ago, "On the Resumption of the Mental Faculties at the Approach of Death." He stated that the mind often becomes clear in death when the brain is greatly diseased, "when inflammation of the coverings is present, and even when there is change in the brain substance itself."

The chemist Wollaston, who died of disease

of the brain, on hearing his friend remark, toward the last, that he had become unconscious, took up a pencil and paper, set down a list of figures, and added them up correctly.

V

THE LUMINIFEROUS ETHER

“I AM not without hope that we may, even here and now, obtain some accurate information concerning that OTHER WORLD, which the instinct of mankind has so long predicted.” ¹

Cicero declares that by natural instinct we infer that there are gods, and *by process of reasoning* we infer what nature they are of ; by the common consent of all nations we are led to suppose that souls endure, but in what resting-place and of what quality they are, *we must infer by process of reasoning*. Do not these words imply that he, too, thought it not beyond human possibility to learn something of “that other life” ?

Two discoveries of modern times seem like a fulfilment of this hope, extravagant as it might

¹ A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers. H. D. Thoreau.

once have appeared. The first is the discovery of the all-pervading ether.¹ The existence of the ether is not verifiable by any of the senses, yet, according to Tyndall, few scientific men would question its existence any sooner than they would question the existence of the sun or moon.

It was formerly supposed that light was due to emanations of minute particles from light-giving bodies. Newton held this view, with others of his time, although it did not satisfactorily account for some curious phenomena observed in the action of light.

It had been noticed that two thin beams of light, either of which alone would produce a luminous spot on a white wall, might so combine as to make a dark spot.

Sound is due to vibrations of the air. It was known to experiment that two sounds combining might, in similar manner, result in silence.

An account appeared in the Volume of Philosophical Transactions for 1684 of a curious

¹ The second "discovery" (I can hardly call it more than an hypothesis) is connected with the first, and will be suggested in Chapter VI.

phenomenon regarding the tides of the port of Batsha, in the East Indies: Two currents of water, approaching each other by different channels, met twice a month in such a way as to neutralize each other.

Thomas Young having observed that two sets of water waves meeting each other might so combine as to heighten or neutralize each other's effect, the question suggested itself to his mind whether there might not be something analogous in the case of light, — whether it might not be caused by the wave-like motion of some all-pervading substance. When he ventured to express this novel idea, it was at first ridiculed. Still experiments and calculations were made with reference to it, and such startling verifications obtained, that the emanation theory was abandoned, — “not because it was absurd or inconceivable, as in these respects it is far superior to the wave theory. It was rejected because certain small fringes of color did not appear in the exact place, nor of the exact size, in which, according to the calculations of the emanation theory, they should have appeared.”¹

¹ The Principles of Science. W. Stanley Jevons.

Newton observed that by holding a piece of black ribbon up for the sun to strike through it he could see between its threads colored fringes which he found himself totally unable to account for. The supposition of light's being due to undulations clearly explains this curious appearance, also the repetition of colors sometimes observed within a rainbow.

All phenomena from the simplest to the most complex, it readily explains, the most abstruse problems of double refraction and polarization, as well as the twinkling of the stars or the iridescence of a soap-bubble. All are due to the interference of waves, to their combined or opposing influence.

Predictions were also made in regard to appearances never before observed. Tyndall's American Lectures on Light mention the curious phenomenon foretold by the geometer Poisson. In calculating what should be the appearance of the shadow of an extremely small opaque disk exposed to light radiating from a luminous point, he found that the centre of the shadow ought to be as brilliant as if the disk had been pierced at that point. Arago's experiment proved this to be the case.

The crucial test was given by Sir William Hamilton, in making a calculation with regard to the appearance of a small beam of light when sent from a particular direction into certain double refracting crystals. He found that the beam, instead of dividing to form two images, should separate into an infinite number of rays and emerge as a cone. Dr. Lloyd, following Sir William Hamilton's directions with scrupulous exactness, prepared a crystal of arragonite to determine whether or not it was so, and discovered, what no one before him had ever noticed, the radiant cone of light. As much enthusiasm was aroused in regard to this result as had been felt at the appearance of Neptune, which astronomers hailed as a verification of the laws of planetary motion. Since then, although its conditions are so inconceivable, the truth of the wave theory has seldom been questioned.

Its interest for us lies in the fact that undulations imply the existence of some substance to undulate. This substance must reach to all points from which light radiates, even to the remotest star. It makes the universe seem one and homelike, and forever destroys that haunt-

ing terror of the imagination, the vast void that once suggested itself, with dreary anticipations of our whereabouts after death.

It is as cheering a piece of intelligence as it would be to hear that a road had been opened to some distant region whither our kindred have preceded us, to learn of the existence of this all-pervading substance.

Of the nature of this ether we can learn something. Fresnel revealed it as *solid* matter, in making the discovery that the vibrations causing light are transverse instead of being longitudinal. It is more ethereal than the lightest gas, and yet is a solid of great elasticity, and there is not the minutest space either within or without any body that is not filled with it.

It must be infinitely rare, since it penetrates to the heart of crystals and other hard transparent substances through which we see light pass. It must also be infinitely elastic, since light moves nearly a million times faster in it than sound does in air.

VI

THE PSYCHIC BODY

THIS fine elastic ether we are told must not only fill all space, but pervade all other forms of matter, filling all pores that exist even in the densest matter. It exists, then, within our own bodies, and fulfils no doubt some purpose there. Can we form any conjecture as to what that purpose, or any part of that purpose, may be?

Physiological research has revealed to us that every particle of matter in our bodies is renewed in the course of a few years. Study of the brain seems to indicate that memory is dependent on actual physical impressions made by molecular motions on some material, and thereon preserved. This material is never discovered in dissection of the brain. It must be of an invisible, subtle nature. Unlike everything else in the body, it escapes all wear and tear. Might it not be this ethereal substance? Does not the inscrutable problem of the con-

nection of nerve with muscle also suggest some form of spiritualized matter filling the fine tubes of the nerves ?

Microscopic examination reveals the fact that the nerve fibres in all their minutest ramifications, traversing muscular fibres, keep always separate from them, never interfering nor coalescing. The nervous system eliminated from the rest of the body would in itself perfectly represent the human form. The nerves penetrate all parts of the body, and spread in filmy net-work over all surfaces. In life, intelligence appears to flow through them. In examining a dead body we see nothing in the substance of nerve or brain which seems capable of intelligence ; that which was capable of intelligence has fled alike from nerve and brain. The spirit is gone.

Our knowledge of matter is a knowledge of its properties only ; of its inner essence we know no more than we know of spirit, and cannot deny that they may be the same. Milton believed that it was so, declaring in his work on Christian Doctrine his conviction that soul and body are not two distinct and different natures,

but the whole man is soul, and the soul man. To Spinoza every fibre of the body was thrilled by spirit occupying it.

It is an old belief, common to most ancient people, that the spirit of a man conforms in appearance to his body. What if here were another instance in which science confirms ancient belief!

In the discovery of this all-pervading ether is there not enclosed another revelation, the possibility of an imperishable form hidden within us which faithfully represents in every detail the shape that we see? If this were so, one of the dearest dreams of the human race might be realized, — the dream that we can meet again in bodily form those whose earthly vesture we have seen decay. With the form that we have loved, and that has been to us so imbued with spirit, we can never reconcile ourselves to parting. Primitive people conceived the spirit as like the body; and speculative people, when the intuitive childlike days were over, began to puzzle their brains to think out some manner in which it might be possible that the body which they knew to have crumbled to dust might yet be restored.

The Gnostics taught that the genii of the elements attend to this difficult problem and are able, however complicated changes any matter might have passed through, to release and secure for every one, at the last, the elements of his former body. This is also the teaching of the Zoroastrian Avesta. We read in accounts of the Gnostics, that Manes, founder of the Manichean sect, a philosopher who had mastered all the science of his time and travelled to all known lands, was put to death by Varahran, a Sassanian king, because he denied the resurrection of the body.

The chemist Dr. Priestley suggested that he could take his razor and dissolve it in a chemical mixture, so that all trace of it would disappear, and could afterward precipitate the matter and re-form the razor.

Dr. George Wilson, in "*Religio Chemici*," suggested that the individuality of a seed or of a human germ requires for its manifestation only an infinitesimal quantity of matter ; in that lies the determining power that makes the germ develop into an oak, a butterfly, or a man. He believed that enough matter to embody our

individuality will be miraculously preserved for us. "When we stand in the presence of God," he said, "it will not be in a strange untried body, one in which we have never suffered nor enjoyed, but the flesh will gather round the spirit as a natural garment; those few germ particles which were sufficient for our embryonic individuality, unclaimed by any other human being, will return to us and develop into the spiritual body."

He defended and enforced his argument by chemical facts, elements often appearing to act as if under special directions, incomprehensible to us; an atom of phosphorus, for instance, under certain conditions utterly refusing to combine in proportions in which it is generally eager to unite.

Devout Jews rest all their hopes of resurrection on that legend of the Talmud which declares that there is within every human form one small, indestructible bone that is invulnerable to all accidents, and will remain until the Last Day as a proof of identity and nucleus for the body to be restored.

All these speculations imply that there is an

interval of time in which body and spirit are separated. Ancient belief presupposes none, neither does the idea of the psychic body imply it.

In the "History of the Doctrine of a Future Life," by W. R. Alger, we are told that the disembodied soul, as conceived by the Greek, and after him by the Roman, is *material*, but of so thin a contexture that it cannot be felt with the hands, retaining the shape, lineaments, and motion the man had in life.

When the soul of Patroclus appeared to Achilles,

"at every part the form did comprehend
His likeness, his fair eyes, his voice, his stature,
Every weed his person wore it fantasied."

According to Democritus the soul is formed of fine, smooth, round atoms, the most mobile atoms in the body, and their motion permeates it wholly. Lucretius says that the soul consists of subtle atoms of air, vapor, and heat. Beside these is a fourth constituent of the utmost fineness and mobility. Pindar says, —

"And the body yields to death,
But the shape of vital breath
Still in life continueth."

Socrates regarded death as the separation only of soul and body, and believed that the soul retained characteristics by which it could be recognized. Aristotle suggested that beside the four commonly recognized elements, there might be a fifth, the material of spirit. Cicero, referring to this idea, and also to the belief in the lower regions as the abode of spirits, says, "It should be clear that souls on departure from the body, whether they be of air or fire, should ascend. In that fifth natural element, *lacking name rather than intelligibility*, of which I have spoken, we have to deal with something unique and pure, with a disposition to ascend to the highest elevation."

Since so much interest has been awakened in Oriental ideas, we have all become familiar with the "astral body" of the Hindus. Every soul is clothed in two bodies, — the interior original body, eternal as itself, which accompanies it through all its migrations, and the material body made of air, fire, water, and earth, according to the Vedanta philosophy.

Johnson's "Oriental Religions" speaks of the ancient Persian belief that the souls of good

men were clothed with bodies of flame. Flame represents matter passing from one form to another. What shall we call it? Can it be considered matter? If it is not matter, what is it? Is there not here an illustration of that anomalous character attributed to the ether? It is matter, and it is not matter.

The Chinese, according to the same authority ("Oriental Religions"), believe in a spiritual substance which is invisible and all-penetrating. It is called *shin*. Human beings after death are spoken of as *kwai-shin*. The *kwan-ki*, or breath, goes upward; the *pe*, or animal part, goes downward. "The *kwai-shin*," according to Confucius, "are everywhere unseen and unheard."

Says Tyler's "Primitive Culture," "The conception of the spirit among the lower races generally is of a thin, unsubstantial *human image*."

Early travellers tell us the Bushmen believed that the spirit of a man was somewhat like his shadow, made of impalpable material.

The natives of the Tonga Islands represent that the soul is the finer, more aëriated part of the body.

According to the Rev. James Freeman Clarke, the Nicaragua Indians believe that the soul issues from the body in the form of the living person.

Francis Bacon's "Instauration of the Sciences," which was intended to include everything then known to science, described the soul as of a flamy and airy nature, material though invisible, and diffused throughout the whole body.

How similar is it to Swedenborg's belief, that at death man puts off the grosser part only of his body, retaining the purer substance, the spirit ascending in perfect human form, leaving only what is like a rent or worn-out vesture behind it! To Swedenborg the mind occupied in life the whole body, "like a sword of lightning in an elastic scabbard." Dr. Wilkinson, his interpreter, says that disembodiment is hateful to men, and the fear of death itself, apart from the love of life, arises from our ignorance that the dead are men. "No wonder that we shudder with all our life beside a brink where philosophers teach us that the human form is wrecked. It were weakness not to shrink from

the loss of that which is the instrument of all our power.”

We are familiar with the fact that one gas can occupy the same space with another, the particles of the second occupying the spaces between the particles of the first. In the same manner may the ethereal body occupy the visible form, representing it in the minutest detail.

Dr. Evans, author of the “Mind Cure,” illustrates the idea of the spiritual body by the fact that any one that has lost a limb feels often as if the limb were still there. “The spiritual form no knife can pierce. Would the anatomist discover it, let him apply the dissecting knife to his own flesh. Pain will reveal it to his consciousness. In amputation we lose only the material limb, and are unconscious that we have parted with anything. In the same manner we may without shock or sensation of loss give up the whole body and feel as much ourselves as ever.”

“But,” says the philosopher, “if my hand is amputated, below the point where the nerves are severed and connection with the brain interrupted there is no sensation; and is not

this fact proof that the sensation which I was accustomed to attribute to the hand, was in reality wholly in the brain?" Is it not proof rather of the reality of the psychic form, since if the ends of the nerves still connected with the living body are irritated, sensation will be felt in an unseen hand which remains intact?

Any one who has watched the birth of a butterfly feels as if a wondrous new creature totally different from the form that preceded it had come into existence; but Réaumur, by minute dissection, discovered in the caterpillar the rudimentary organs that needed only developing and unfolding to transform it into a butterfly.

The Rev. Isaac Taylor published in 1836 a book called "The Physical Theory of Another Life." The modern discoveries which would tend to confirm his ideas were then very little regarded. Although a firm believer in the inspiration of Scripture, he fearlessly expressed views that must have seemed very heretical at the time, offering them as the testimony of *nature*, which he also regarded with unquestioning confidence. He considers that "if our

human nature is the rudimentary form of a more desirable and extended mode of existence, the future being may be so involved in the present as to be discernible in it, so that a careful examination of our structure, both bodily and mental, will enable us to form some conjectures with regard to our future life."

In investigating this problem he states first his belief that the mind is in the whole body. "We are accustomed," he says, "to speaking as if it were the brain that moved the hand, when we strike a blow. It is no more the brain than it is the heart which supplies the hand with blood. The stomach cannot digest food unless supplied from both brain and heart, yet it is neither brain nor heart that digests the food, but the living power in the stomach. . . . The mind is the occupant at large of the entire animal organization, present in the arm that strikes, in the hand that grasps."

Can we not feel the cordiality rushing to our very fingers' ends, as we seize the hand of one dear to us? and is it not in our power to withhold all feeling, and to offer a mere flesh-and-blood hand, when it is conventionality only that demands it?

In recognizing that the mind fills the earthly shape, have we not seized upon a fact bearing upon something which is beyond mortal contingencies and accidents, and remains independent of them — the spiritual form?

Dr. Taylor repudiates the commonly accepted idea of the brain's being an organ that despatches commands and receives sensations; and regards it as a secreting viscus, supplying excitement only, the idea having been suggested to him by the discovery that muscles can be moved by the outside stimulus of galvanism. He reflects upon the fact of the special directions often conveyed to muscles, as it has been generally considered, from the brain, and doubts if one viscus would be required to perform the double function of supplying stimulus, and also giving special directions.

Examining the structure and arrangement of the nervous cords, they seem to him admirably adapted to conveying a stimulus merely, the mind in the limb determining motion, the mind in the organ determining sensation. Considering, for instance, the sense of touch, he thinks the arrangement and reticulation of the nerves

of feeling are such as to render the supposition of the conveyance of distinct local sensations from the surface of the body to the brain, in the highest degree ineligible, while the hypothesis of a mere conveyance of excitement from the brain to the surface, and of the immediate presence of the percipient faculty at the point of sensation, is rendered almost certain. Apply the same hypothesis to the other organs of sensation, he says, and instead of an organ despatching commands and receiving sensations, we should have in the brain a secreting viscus merely, and should attribute sensation, volition, consciousness, and power, not to an animal organ, but to the mind natively fraught with power, linked to the animal structure *and suffused throughout it*. This is more clearly discerned in simpler structures than man's. He recognizes the analogy in the structure of lower and higher animals, seeing that nature works by one pattern, elaborating it more or less. He declares also that some passages of Scripture suggest the idea that the die used in our present construction will remain unchanged in our new birth, nature seeming to become attached to a design

that she has worked from, and conforming the arrangement of bones, muscles, nerves, and blood-vessels, to one type in all creatures.

Although he does not suggest that the all-pervading ether furnishes the material for the psychic body, he accepts the idea of its existence, and asserts that there prevails throughout nature a pervading of the dense elements by the less dense ; ponderable elements occupying often the same space with each other, and the imponderable pervading all, solid bodies being permeated by moisture or by gases, fluids being pervious to other fluids, gases to other gases.

Guizot, in his Sixth Lecture on the History of Civilization in France, says that the early doctors of Christianity were impressed with the conviction of the material nature of the soul ; only by slow degrees did the opposite opinion grow up.

Paul speaks of the natural and the spiritual body, "body, soul, and spirit."

Giordano Bruno, the Dominican monk, to whom a statue has lately been erected in Rome, in honor of his fearless and intelligent thoughts and utterances, believed that the spirit occupied

all parts of the body, necessarily corresponding to it in appearance.

It is curious to observe into how many minds the idea of the psychic body has entered. It is the *linga*, the subtle body, of Kapila, the *Nerven-Geist* of German philosophy, perhaps also what Spinoza meant by his "*essentia corporis*," which he affirmed to pertain to the essence of the mind, and to be necessarily eternal.

Ulrici believed, that after everything that has been drawn from the environment is yielded back to it at death, something which was ensheathed in the nerves and tissues remains; this enswathement of the soul, ethereal, intangible, invisible, departs with it.

In so far does science agree with primitive belief in regarding the spirit as in the form of the body. The haunting terror of a strange, bodiless condition, it banishes with that of the vast abysmal void.

VII

NATURE'S HINTS

“To know thyself immortal,” says Goethe, “live in the Whole.” Summoned away from the little spot we have occupied on earth, we hold yet a place in the universe we cannot slip out of. But many of us hold it unconsciously. “Little child,” says Virgil, “know thy mother by her smile.” Hemmed in between brick walls, looking out only upon city streets from which every trace of nature, every wandering grass blade, has been carefully eradicated, we cannot see her smile. It rests on the broad meadows, on flowing waters, on forests and hills.

What wonder if a man who is occupied all day with worldly affairs, and does not even glance up at the sky above him, should say, “I doubt if there is any God; I see no trace of Him, and with regard to another life beyond the present, I feel no intimations of it”?

In primitive times, before artificial ways of living had shut men out from all intercourse with nature, it was not so. Said the homely priest of Ennerdale, "The thought of death sits easy on the man who has been born and dies among the mountains." The high mountains, so pure and inaccessible, are like a realization of heaven. If any one who felt that he was losing confidence in God could go into the mountain region, and looking about him realize how "the might of the hills is His," it seems as if the thought would banish all fear. Those dark forms lying motionless, day after day, and year after year, under sun or shadow, are representative of a thought. Whose constancy and whose strength are manifested through them?

The sea mirrors the infinite, rolling its full billows, wave after wave, in endless succession, sounding its hollow music since time began. Was this great image of joy and strength given us to taunt our feeble, ephemeral lives, or was it foreseen from the first that the sight of its fullness, its unchanging vigor, would awaken us to the consciousness of a strong, irrepressible life, in which we also share?

Dr. George Wilson, the chemist, in "Religio Chemici," explains the special constitution of the atmosphere as an instance of Divine beneficence. To me it seems still more a token of good-will, to have put into it the expression of perfect peace with which the high blue sky, above the region of earth-born clouds, always regards us.

The most ancient people have always felt a bond between themselves and the stars. Aias, the hero of one of Sophocles' plays, when brought to the lowest depths of despair, having decided to take his own life, exclaims to the stars, —

"And how will ye, O eyes,
That watch all varying chances of my life,
How will ye bear to see me living on —
With those Atridæ that have ruined me?"

In some of the rude pictures of the North American Indians, lines are drawn downward from the stars to show their influence on men. It is a belief it has been hard to outgrow. The stars still have their influence in their expression, in their clear, penetrating look, steadily fixed upon us.

Cloud-forms, too, had their meaning in ancient

days, and their motion was significant. An old Venetian legend declares that the Doge, Andrea Dandolo, was directed in selecting the situation for the Church of St. Mary the Beautiful, to observe where a red cloud rested, and that would indicate the heaven-appointed site.

The question sometimes crosses our minds, Can it be without any purpose that these graceful visions come and go before us? They are an outpouring of Creative Spirit, and suggest a wealth of variety and beauty beyond our comprehension. As we watch their changing loveliness, we feel that it is something to be thankful for that we have, through all our earthly pilgrimage, the travelling company of the clouds.

The least observation of nature impresses us with the minute attention with which everything is watched and cared for. Thoreau, turning up the sod from the damp cavity of the muskrat's nest, saw what looked like beautiful frost crystals of rare form. "When I examined more closely," he says, "I saw that gossamer-like threads stood out in all directions from the roots of the grass, and were covered with clear, crystalline dew, so wonderfully nourished is the grass

we trample on and esteem so cheap." To produce this spring greenness, the most delicate and magical processes go on, out of sight, under the sod.

Watch the beautiful sight when the opening leaves first shake themselves out in the breeze, the exquisite plaiting and folding and packing in the bud. Observe the care which fitted them out for the winter storms, the soft woolly wrappings and the resinous coats that guarded them; what mother's love could surpass it?

I feel that it is worth while to have come into the world (old Silenus to the contrary, notwithstanding), if it were only to listen to the birds on a June morning. In their blithe melody, it seems as if they knew for a certainty what we only half know, the secret that "all is well." Watch the mazy dances of insects, and feel the delight of "all that leaps, and shouts, and sings, that beats the gladsome air or glides beneath the wave." The general cheeriness of nature is so reassuring, we lose heart in regard to our own destiny only when we separate ourselves from the out-door world.

Music can say to us what words can never

interpret. It can lift one above the fear of death. In the clear regions to which it transports us, everything seems sure and safe. All that could awaken doubt or fear is seen in its true insignificance. Thoreau, in speaking of the death of his brother, says, "Soon after, I listened to a music-box; and if, at any time, that event had seemed inconsistent with the beauty and harmony of the universe, it was then gently constrained into the placid course of nature, by those steady notes in mild and unoffended tone, echoing far and wide under the heavens."

Plato says, "Music was not given to men by the immortal gods to delight their senses only, but to appease the trouble of their souls." He knew that it was "the comforter." Through the fine, far-away notes of the flute, through the deep peal of the organ, what communes with us? Is it a mere vibrating column of air we hear? The voices of nature reach deeper into our hearts than human speech can do. They speak to us in our native tongue.

Through the revelations of science the intellect discovers God. Through the sights and sounds of nature, the heart recognizes Him.

Wilkinson, interpreting Swedenborg, says, "Nature is a force willed from the first to sculpture the images and paint the portraits of God's attributes." And to Emerson the air is full of sounds, the sky of tokens, the ground is all memoranda and signatures, and every object covered with hints. Above us is the sky, with its serene depths, over which hasten the fugitive clouds ; the changeless beyond the changeful.

Our lives are enacted in drama before us. The rivers rise in soft mist from the ocean, and return again to the bosom whence they sprang. Every stream, by however devious a course, finds, at length, its way back to the sea.

The Druids taught their rude followers to reverence a budding spray, as if realizing the miracle wrought in it ; life revealing itself from seeming death. Do we need to be told any more plainly than in the germination of the seed, and the resurrection of the springtime, the secret of hidden life ?

VIII

CHEERFUL VIEWS OF DEATH

FARADAY, in writing to a friend concerning the death of his mother, said, "Perhaps I do not feel the awe that I ought at the thought of death. It is, to me, only like being in another country." Browning was a firm believer in the similarity of the next life to the present, and often expressed his belief that we shall

"still fight on — fare ever
There as here," —

never doubting the day would dawn

"when power would come full in play —
If not on the homely earth,
Then yonder, worlds away." .

Auerbach's last letter to a friend contained the inspiring words: "Always think of me as striving blithely upward." And almost the last words Victor Hugo spoke were: "I shall be ready to begin work again on the morrow.

Death is not the dreary finish to life ; it is its prolongation ; my work is only begun."

Tolstoi, that wonderfully close and sympathetic observer of human character and experiences, represents in his sketch of "Three Deaths," that just as the final change was actually upon them, a strong hopeful frame of mind set in, in both the dreary peasant and the sad querulous lady, and each thought, "Now I shall recover." Others have often observed this phenomenon in those who are nearing death. Is it an in-draught from the new life that fills them with fresh courage?

Is it because this world is so beautiful, and we have had so much pleasure here, that we dread leaving it? "All that I have seen," says Emerson, "leads me to trust God for all that I have not seen." Other experiences, even more delightful, may await us elsewhere.

With the light cast by science on the probabilities of our future, can we not follow the philosophic De Maistre, who, more than a hundred years ago, resolved to regard death as an adventure, and the beginning of a new life, rather than as a blow to all the expectations he had cherished?

“Oh, pusillanimous,” exclaims the German Drossbach, “the great events of nature are too vast for thy weak heart !”

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. Have we then lost all? Alexander, starting for the Orient, having given away all his treasures, was asked by his friends what he had left for himself. He answered proudly, “My hopes.”

In ancient times more cheerful views were taken of death. “The figure of Death,” says C. W. King in “The Gnostics and their Remains,” “is often represented in old art in the midst of cupids, and hardly to be distinguished from the sportive group about him. To understand how so charming a type came to be appropriated to such a signification, it is necessary to cast off modern associations, and to recollect that to the ancient mind, arguing merely from the analogy of nature, death presented itself as only the necessary converse of birth, and consequently the thought of it was not accompanied by terror. Christians supplanted this representation with the figure of a *larva*, or bad man’s ghost, — the present skeleton representation.”

The quaint Sir Thomas Browne suggests that it is only the long habit of living that indisposeth us for dying. We fear the untried, and, as Charles Lamb used so pathetically to reiterate, "We cannot bear to leave this good world."

The revelations of the vast cemeteries of Etruscan cities show that these predecessors of the Romans looked upon death only as departure. Accompanying the death-bed representations painted and sculptured upon their tombs is often the figure of a horse, or a chariot with winged genii, waiting to convey the spirit to its new home. "After an experience of the ghastly relics of modern sepulchres," says Andrew T. Sibbald, a recent explorer, "it is with pleased surprise that one enters for the first time an Etruscan house of the dead. The decorations often represent scenes of social festivity, games, races, picnics, etc. After more than two thousand years of silence the opening tombs of this mysterious (evidently Oriental) people declare to us their views of the future life. We see from the quiet, dignified bearing of the dying, that they regarded the change

without fear. No doctrinal despair had poisoned their latest hour. The separation was to them only what it would have been if they had been called away on a necessary journey. They looked forward to meeting again, and to enjoying similar delights to those which earth had afforded them, seeming to have no idea but that they should be still their old identical earthly selves, called only to take a new part in life."

The same simple, cheerful feeling in regard to the dead prevails also among the Chinese. When any one dies, they speak of him as having "returned to his family." And to the old Norsemen, death is only *heimgang* (home-going).

The Greeks planted beside their tombs glossy evergreen trees, of fair and bright aspect, and their views of death are fitly imaged by them.

"Socrates reminded his hearers that the swans, birds sacred to Apollo, appear to have received from him the gift of foreseeing the true character of death, and die with song and joyousness, as should every well-instructed man."¹

Cicero, in his first Tusculan Discourse, called

¹ Cicero's Discourse on Death.

“Death No Bane,” asks, “What if the last day bring — not annihilation, but simply a change of place?” Our attention is called to ancient belief, that in proportion as men were fewer removes from the beginning of things and from the race of heaven, they were perhaps better able to discover the truth, and that it was in early times considered that death was a migration only, the exchange of one life for another.

Schoolcraft, and the early Jesuit missionaries to our own aborigines, represent them as much occupied with the thought of a future life, and say that their minds seem to dwell more on the rewards and the joys it will offer them than on punishment of any kind, the “Master of Breath” being to them a parent rather than a judge. The Happy Hunting Grounds lie only just outside the regions known to them. A wandering hunter sometimes happened so near them as to hear strains of music and festivity from the borders.

Brinton’s “Myths of the New World” gives a legend of The Island of the Blest. A beautiful young girl having died on the eve of her marriage to a chief, he determined to follow her

to the "Land of Souls," which the traditions of his people said lay to the southward. With no other guide than this knowledge, he travelled on; there was snow on the ground when he left, and it clung in thick mats to the trees and bushes, but he noticed that there was gradually less of it, and so concluded that he was taking the right direction. Finally he reached a spring-like country, with flowers in blossom, and heard the voices of birds. Here he saw a narrow foot-path which he entered; it led up a steep precipitous ridge at the summit of which was a lodge. An old man with snow-white hair and marvellously bright eyes received him, and pointed out to him the wide blue plains he must traverse, but informed him that he must leave his body behind, — a proposition that he received without dismay, being informed that he would receive it again.

Everything depends upon the view we take. Perhaps we might, with equal assurance, consent to relinquish ours for a while, confident that we shall either receive the same again, or that something better adapted to our use will be provided for us.

IX

THE NATURE OF DEATH

WHAT then is death — “that intensely vital action we call death”? “Death,” answer both ancient philosophy and modern science, “is not destruction to either mind or body. It is the severing only of the bond that united them.”

Gassendi, whose ideas are sketched in Lange’s “History of Materialism,” thought that a definite number of atoms were in the first place created, and that all action going on in the world was due to their combining or separating.

Dr. John Toland, a dissenting preacher of about two hundred years ago, declared that when we profoundly consider the essence and accidents of that matter into which we are mutable, we shall find that there is no death attending the substance of anything; nothing is diminished; it changes form only.

Chemical investigation confirms this idea, and reveals all the activity of the natural world as

due to change of form, or to ever-varying union and separation.

Science nowhere sees death, but ever-changing life. What we have called death is shown to be also birth, continual change of form being a law of life, death only a phase of life which is necessary as preparation for an improved condition.

"Everything," says Michelet, in speaking of the universal destruction of animal life, "must pass through nature's great crucible, to be renewed and purified." "In every pebble that lies unheeded on the ground are pent sundry gaseous substances, which only await the delivering hand of the analyzer to be liberated, possessing in their free and etherealized existence many powers and properties which imprisonment debarred them from exercising. To the ordinary observer a stone thus transmuted appears to be destroyed. It may become invisible, but its apparent death is the beginning of a new life, with extended powers."¹

"Putrefaction," according to Huxley, "is a concomitant, not of death, but of life." The

¹ Wood's Natural History of the Animate Creation.

microscope reveals the little specks which we notice as the beginning of mould, or of putrefaction, as infinitesimal plants.

Physiological study reveals the fact that all the material of the body is several times entirely changed in the course of an ordinary lifetime. We have parted particle by particle with that form that seemed so much a part of ourselves. We did not know it at the time, nor suffer in any way from the transformation. Of the wonderful skill with which this change is accomplished, we can form no conception; but in considering it, light dawns upon one point. It shows us wherein our identity lies, and we recognize ourselves as spirit and independent of accident.

We need not say to ourselves, "Do not fear death," since there is no death; but "Shrink not from transformations."

It does not seem strange, when we reflect upon it, that we should be after a while mysteriously summoned from a world which we so mysteriously entered. It is the association of death with accident and disease, with wreck and disaster to the body, that so tests our faith. In

the old Gothic legend, one who is about to die hears strange voices calling him, till, irresistibly impelled, he seeks the sea-shore, and finds an empty boat awaiting him, in which he seats himself and is rowed by a spirit crew to the calm land of the departed.

"No one," says Zschokke, "would think of death as dreadful if he had never seen a corpse, that icy statue, which we loved when it was animated by the spirit, but whose stony impassiveness now causes us to shudder.

"God implanted in the soul a deep, strong love for its body for the time that it remains in it. When the purpose of the connection is accomplished, the soul leaves it, but the discarded body remains still in God's universe. What becomes of the unveiled soul? Does it pass out of creation while the dust in which it enveloped itself is still in existence?"

W. R. Greg, the author of "Enigmas of Life," an honest, fearless seeker after truth, rests his belief in the spirit's continued life, on intuitive conviction only. "We experience," he says, "a spontaneous, irrepressible belief, in watching beside a lifeless form, soon after the change we

call death has occurred, that the person we knew is not there. It is not because the eyes are firmly closed, the limbs motionless, the face fixed and expressionless; we have seen them perhaps so before, in sleep or trance, but not experienced this peculiar sensation that something we knew and loved in that form had departed from it." The philosophic and the untutored mind rest here together. We cannot prove that it is so, but we know it notwithstanding.

In a letter of Sir Thomas Browne's, on the death of a friend whom he attended as a physician, he says that at his departure he received a deep impression of the beauty of death. "The spiritual body seemed to anticipate the formal moment of death, and the future life to invade the present, perceptibly to the senses, as the ocean is felt far inland, up a tidal river."

To Spinoza we are immortal because we are thoughts of God. We know that any human designer forms always in his mind a conception of what he will make, before executing it; so we must suppose does also our Creator. Before we exist in any form, we exist as His ideas, as part of His own eternal essence; and our immor-

tality is as secure as that of the source from which we sprung.

Darwin says that he once held a firm conviction of the immortality of the soul, and although in later life he ceased to rely on this intuition, he still considered immortality probable on rational grounds, believing that man is destined to a fuller and more perfect development. Life on earth, science assures us, is only for a limited period ; progress, he believes, is illimitable ; therefore it must be elsewhere continued. The philosopher laboriously arrives at this conclusion ; the intuitive child-like mind knew it all beforehand.

Mr. John Fiske, in "Myths and Myth Makers," says, "The idea of death is something impossible for the primitive mind to entertain."

In the picture writing of the Iroquois Indians, lately deciphered by Ellen R. Emerson, a cross like the letter X, closed by horizontal lines at the top and bottom, was found to represent death. The sun was often placed beside this symbol, with a line running from it to the centre of the cross, indicating that the Source of Life had drawn the living warmth to Himself.

Dr. Hartley, in the curious old book entitled "Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations," published in 1749, declares that "as it is not possible to produce any evidence against a future state, the probability for it is at least equal to that against it; that is, according to the precise language used in the doctrine of chances, it is equal to one half. We make our ignorance of the means by which our existence is preserved after death, and of the manner in which we are to exist, an argument against immortality, believing that what we cannot see *is not*. We own that we are ignorant whence we came and whither we go, but our not being able to penetrate into the dark regions beyond death, were that absolutely the case, would not be evidence that there is nothing there. That we can both penetrate thither, and discover something in those regions, it is my next business to show. The first step we take, though it be through regions very faintly illuminated, does turn the scale in some measure in favor of a future state."

He considers that the mystery of birth throws some light on the mystery of death, and that it

was intended to intimate to us the spirit's survival of the change. In passing from foetal to earthly life, the embryo is separated from its source of nourishment. All its conditions are changed; it can only exist by making use of organs which, though they have been maturing within it, it has never yet tried.

Could one judge beforehand that birth into this world was introduction to a new life? Would not he rather conclude that the child must immediately expire, wanting so many things formerly necessary to its subsistence, being exposed to so many hazards and impressions apparently unsuitable? Its cries seem to confirm this idea, its painful entrance into the world resembling what happens at death.

Dr. Hartley considers it very dissonant to the other events of life, that it should end in suffering. He cannot reconcile it to the beauty and harmony of the visible world, and the general prepollency of pleasure over pain, that so bitter a morsel should be given us at the last. If it were of a remedial nature, as all other pains in life either of body or mind are, he could under-

stand it ; but its being an *end* controverts this hypothesis.

Pindar says of the Orphic mysteries, —

“Happy who these rites hath kenned,
Ere beneath the ground he goeth ;
Well he knoweth of life’s end,
Well its God-given source he knoweth.”

Should not the clear truths of science do as much for us as did dreams, omens, and auguries for the ancient Greeks ?

“The common wonders going on incessantly about us, the renovations and transmigrations in which individuality and identity are preserved, ought to reassure us in respect to the changes we are called upon to pass through.

“In regard to the lower animals, in every instance in which a transition from one mode of life to another is to occur, a well-practised naturalist could detect signs of it. In the initial stage of its being he could see that it had in prospect another mode of life.

“The caterpillar at a certain season of the year abandons its usual haunts, turns away from its wonted enjoyments, seeks out some crevice to afford it shelter, and enters upon a new and

untried condition. It is employed in a manner which has no utility whatever in relation to its present mode of life. It is following a leading of nature. If we should find that all these forecastings and prudential expectations came to nothing, and that the deluded creature had perished in its torpor, and its dust had been scattered to the winds, we might tremble for our own prospects.

“Everything belonging to human nature bespeaks the existence of undeveloped powers which only indicate their presence without reaching their apparent end. The probabilities that man, a being of so complex a constitution, is destined to undergo transitions, is as a thousand to one. We look forward to the prospect of it with a sort of incredulous apprehension. It may when it occurs be felt only as a simple natural epoch.

“In looking forward to any great change in our condition on earth, we are apt to suppose that all our modes of feeling, our tastes and habits, our mental and moral condition, will be so altered that we shall hardly know ourselves. The change comes, the same old feelings and

thoughts beset us, our habits have as strong a hold on us, our peculiarities are unaffected. We are much more surprised at the slight disturbance it has been to our real selves than at the greatness of the change. So may it be in death.”¹

In Dr. Taylor’s time the common idea of heaven was of a convocation of worshippers convened in perpetuity upon ethereal clouds, occupied forever in the same ecstatic manner. He calls upon us to realize the exuberance and freedom, the richness and beauty of the material world, and say if this can be so. “Is not the future world as simply natural and true as this world of land and water, of trees and houses, with which we have now to do?”

“There is about our present life often something dreamy and indistinct, as if we were hardly awake. On certain occasions, under favorable conditions, we see more clearly. In our next transition the only change we feel may be that the body has become a better instrument for the spirit; that everything has become more vivid and clear, as it might to a man who, after

¹ The Physical Theory of Another Life. Rev. Isaac Taylor.

groping his way across long stretches of marshy level veiled in fogs, at length reaches a height where a clear sun-lighted landscape spreads itself before him.”¹

W. R. Greg, in “Enigmas of Life,” suggests that the higher branches of physiology may yet throw some light on the great secrets of life and death, of the probability of a future life, and the character of the change called death.

“Accompanied by diseased bodily conditions we sometimes catch glimpses of mental powers far exceeding anything of which health is capable. In these conditions the mind becomes somewhat separated from the body. As death, that culmination of disease and complete separation from the body, approaches, powers of insight of wonderful depth and clearness are sometimes revealed.”

It is a common experience, with those who have been restored after nearing death, that their mental powers were intensified. Schiller's last words were, “Many things are becoming clearer to me ;” and Browning represents Paracelsus as conscious, while he was dying, that

¹ The Physical Theory of Another Life. Rev. Isaac Taylor.

minute by minute death was filling him with power.

We are warned by cautious advisers not to look beyond the present moment, to concern ourselves only with what we know, and to banish speculation. But how is it as we grow old, when, as Dr. Holmes has recently confided to us, nothing will seem real but the unreal? Our powers are failing, yet we still feel that cheerfulness is the natural state of a human being, and would fain keep up such a temper if there appeared to be any reasonable grounds for it. Study nature; examine the larva of any winged creature shortly before it enters upon the death-like slumber that precedes its change; notice the wasting of the old nerves and muscles, and the rough draught of its new form distinctly to be detected. New points of attachment have formed for prospective muscles; a new nervous system is sketched out; and what is that tiny membranous scale connected with the breathing surface?—the rudiment of a wing.

We look hopefully forward as the instruments on which we have depended begin to fail us, to

the new sources of activity about to open, and can but regard our waning bodily powers as a necessary concomitant of our developing spiritual faculties.

Although we realize that in certain respects our capability is lessened, we feel that there is something in us that does not share in the decay, that time has no power to touch, and, reassured by nature's hints, can confidently prepare for work that we know will never be finished under earthly conditions.

The experience of Mr. Hughes, inventor of the microphone, is suggestive. He was experimenting with a stretched metal wire traversed by an electric current, transmitting sound vibrations to it ; but in listening for their reproduction from the wire he met only with vexatious disappointments, until finally the wire, under his persevering efforts, vibrated so strongly as to break. At the moment it broke, the sound for which he had vainly listened was emitted, and the discovery was made that an imperfect connection was needed, an alternate opening and closing of the circuit. Between the two broken ends of the wire, the work was done.

The severing of this mortal coil may prove an equally fortunate accident for us. Just when everything appears to have come to a final disastrous issue, may be the moment of our triumph.

X

THE FRAGMENTARY CHARACTER OF HUMAN LIFE

GEOLOGICAL investigations reveal to us that an infinitely long process was required to prepare the earth for our dwelling-place. The nebular hypothesis traces back its history to the time when it was a revolving spheroid of fiery vapor. That must have been many millions of years ago; Darwin thought it was more than three hundred millions of years.

By gradual cooling and condensing, a crust was formed, which, with tremendous vicissitudes of upheaval and depression, and vast climatic changes, became fitted to maintain the humblest forms of life, through whose growth and development, with continual tendency to improvement, the human form was at length attained.

It would seem that he for whom it had been worth while to make all these grand preparations should justify them by great achievements.

Twenty per cent of human beings, we are told, pass away before rational consciousness is attained. Of the remainder there are few who do not labor under some special disabilities; but, even for those most favorably situated to accomplish what they undertake, the time allowed is so brief that, considering the inevitable mistakes which the clearest-sighted even must make, and all the baffling influences that beset a man, it is rarely that any one can do more than merely to intimate, by his efforts, that it might be possible for him to accomplish something if it were not that, before he is fairly started on his work, his brief allowance of time is ended. His life can be only a suggestion of what might have been. He dies with vast desires unfulfilled, his conceptions of what he longs to do surpassing all possibility of achievement. "Man goes to the grave dragging the chain of his broken hopes." ¹

What wonder that Heraclitus should conceive the idea that in fire lay the original germ of all things, "the restless, changeful flow of things that never *are*, but always are *becoming*,

¹ Bossuet.

— forever kindling into flame, and passing into smoke and ashes ” ? ¹

“ We see often men who appear to have become thoroughly qualified to do their work, and to serve humanity, just as the arena of earthly activity is closed to them. It seems as if man were ordained to spend his allotted span of time in sharpening his tools, and learning how to use them, and to be called out of the work-shop the moment his industrial education is complete ; this world being a school where he is to learn his craft, but not the only scene on which he is to practise it.” ²

“ It takes one life to learn how to live,” declare even those of humblest aim ; and men of great gifts, or of exceptional advantages, have felt as deeply as the lowliest the disappointment earthly conditions entail.

Humboldt wrote to Agassiz, in reference to the completion of the labors in which they were both so enthusiastically engaged : “ Alas, my friend, one does not finish ! ”

Beethoven said, only a short time before his

¹ History of Philosophy. G. H. Lewes.

² Enigmas of Life. W. R. Greg.

death : "I feel as if I had written scarcely more than a few notes. I hope still to bring forth great works."

Gainsborough told Sir Joshua Reynolds that his chief regret in dying, was that he felt he had just now begun to see what his deficiencies were, and thought he understood how to remedy them.

I clip this notice from a recent critical review in reference to the death of a young writer : "Such was the keenness of his demands on life, the depth of his aims, the subtlety of his intellect, and his capacity for work, that one cannot but feel as if the destroying angel had outdone himself in heartlessness, by cutting such a man off, ere he had fairly begun, as it were, to show his hand." ¹

Who is there that cannot count up scores of cases that seem just as mysterious, just as heartless, if we dare say it? As they disappear around us, the gap closes, and they pass from memory. We can only trust that they are valued elsewhere.

If all who die with their ends unattained, simply through want of time, were to make

¹ Notice in *Nation*, of Edmund Gurney of London.

their appeal to any reasonable earthly ruler, who can doubt that he would be influenced by the justice of their demand for enlarged opportunity?

As I watch the leisurely processes of Nature, it seems to me always that her motto is, "Patient, because Eternal." No sign of haste ever mars the perfect finish of her work. All my observation of the natural world reveals to me signs that its Creator is an artist, loving beautiful and finished work. I trace His hand in the structure of the human frame; it is still the same; nothing careless or unadapted to its purpose ever appears.

Will not He who designed the organism form an equally artistic conception of the life? It is not an artistic conception, that a staunchly built and beautifully equipped vessel should be wrecked almost in the starting.

If it were the work of any human artist that I was inspecting, and, after observing the infinite pains taken with every detail of some of his productions, I noticed others with an unfinished look, should I not naturally conclude that these were to receive further attention?

What shall round our lives into completeness,

and compensate us for what appears to be a grievous wrong, — what but another life so similar to this, in its conditions, that experiences here so painfully acquired can there be of use to us?

Even what we have striven most diligently and ardently to accomplish, we must leave incomplete. “If I had but my life to live over again, I could do better,” exclaims many a one, sadly regarding its narrowing span. And perhaps that is just what we shall have, — what science intimates to us in the material similarity revealed between our earth and other worlds.

The evolution (unfolding) of a human spirit requires more than one life, says Oriental philosophy. Individuality is but partly manifested in one birth. “The iron will to become a Buddha (enlightened one) runs through all births, and is itself a creative force. As long as there is still any unsatisfied desire for life, will the spirit become again incarnated.”

“Here endeth the first lesson!” were the words selected by Theodore Monod for the *épitaph* on his tombstone.

XI

OTHER WORLDS LIKE OURS

THAT the stars are to be our home after death, is one of the most wide-spread beliefs. The most philosophical and the most unsophisticated, from Plato to the Tasmanian savages, agree on this point.

The Milky Way, the pathway of souls to the North American Indian, was also considered by the Gnostics the road traversed by departed spirits.

Origen, one of the most revered of the early Christian fathers, had a chart on which the whole course they must pursue was definitely mapped out.

Cicero says that ignorance led to the invention of the lower world: "a man's life escaping, he drops to the ground, he is covered with earth, and men foolishly suppose that the rest of his existence is spent under ground. The soul, like inflamed air, must necessarily tend up-

ward. It cleaves the gross, concrete atmosphere, by reason of its more fiery nature. After surmounting the region dank with exhalations from the earth, it reaches and recognizes somewhat like itself. It comes to a stand-still at those fires the stars, which are a combination of rarefied air and tempered sun-heat. It moves no farther, but is nourished and sustained by the same aliment by which the stars are nourished and sustained. It has found its natural habitation, and lacks nothing."

And what says Ovid?—

"The earth conceals the flesh,
The shade flits round the tomb,
The under-world receives the image,
The spirit seeks the stars."

Socrates advised his followers to avoid astronomy, as a study barren of results, and an attempt to pry into what it belongs only to the gods to know.

Comte declared that nothing could ever be learned, by human means, of the constitution of the stars.

Within the last half-century the spectroscope has conducted us to startling revelations. What

a wild fancy it would have seemed once, that if we could take a little bit of the sun or a star into our hands and examine it we should find it was made of the same materials as our own earth! "Perhaps the most momentous discovery made by the spectroscope—one with which no familiarity can lessen our wonder, or our sense of its deep significance—is the fact that the stars are *like us* in their ultimate elements," says "The New Astronomy."¹

The very first observations through a telescope showed the phases of Venus. The idea perhaps at once arose, "It may be inhabited, since it is subject to changes of season, of day and night." How hospitable looks Venus mildly beaming upon us in the twilight! It seems already to welcome us to its bright domain. Observations made during the last transit across the sun confirm the impression made during the transit of 1874, that Venus has an atmosphere about equal in density to our own, and clouds floating within it.

But Venus is less favorably situated for observation than Mars. Astronomers and physicists

¹ S. P. Langley.

agree that life would probably be possible for us there, even without any essential physical change ; but it is not in our present investment that we expect to make the journey. Who can tell what freedom from environment the psychic body may confer ?

Mars is known to have land and water on its surface. Snows appear to accumulate around its poles in winter, and gradually melt away in the springtime. Clouds and mist drive across its plains, temporarily obscuring them. The changing outlines of sea and shore indicate tidal action. It is already to us a living world.

Professor Jevons says, "We infer with a high degree of probability that Mars has an atmosphere absorbing blue rays." Does it not diminish our dread of leaving this earth, to learn that we may still have our own familiar rocks and earths about us and the blue sky over our heads ?

It may be for us as it was for Æneas, who, in his visit to Elysium, recognized "his own sun and stars, and the purple-hued fields."

We are told that Mercury, from its nearness to the sun, must be unbearably hot. But dif-

ferent reflecting and refracting conditions of its atmosphere perhaps modify the temperature.

Saturn and Jupiter seem to be still in a gaseous condition, like what our earth may have been, according to the nebular hypothesis, millions of years ago. Jupiter, much perturbed with fearful storms, appears to be in a similar condition to that of our sun, as shown by the variations in his spots. We know of nothing to prevent his four satellites from being inhabited. We have less knowledge of the remoter planets, yet even the distant Neptune has revealed a disk-like appearance.

Suspensions have been expressed that the distant planets may not receive heat enough from the sun to maintain life; but a hydrogen band lately discovered in the spectrum of Uranus, suggests that a high enough temperature prevails there to separate water into its constituents.

If the planets fail us, there are all the hosts of the fixed stars. Stars differ much in respect to temperature. According to astronomical theories this indicates a difference in age. Some of them may be in a condition to sustain animal

life, and others not yet ready for it. This supposition gives an interest to the question which of them most resembles our own earth in constitution. Antares and several other stars appear to have atmospheres containing aqueous vapor. Aldebaran shows a spectrum similar to that of our sun, the nebula of Orion hydrogen gas, and Sirius several of our mineral earths.

The spectroscope, beside revealing to us a dozen or more of our common minerals, in gaseous form, on sun and stars, shows us also on distant stars three at least of the great forces of nature in operation, — light, heat, and chemical affinity ; and wherever there is matter we know that gravitation prevails.

Our nearest neighbor among the fixed stars is *Alpha Centauri*. Telescopic observation reveals it as a double star, and we find by the revolution of the two stars about a common centre in elliptical orbits, that the same laws of gravitation we have been accustomed to are there obeyed.

Meteorites may come from those distant worlds. To their mysterious source we have no clew. Wherever they come from, laws of crystal-

lization must be in force, since iron in different forms, and fragments of sandstone penetrated by metallic threads, are found in them.

When this earth was supposed to be the centre of all created things, sun, moon, and stars having been made only to serve it, it seemed rational to regard it as the only inhabited sphere ; but since it has been revealed as only an insignificant member of a starry cluster, so small that even from some points within the special system to which it belongs (as for instance from Uranus) it would be invisible, it no longer seems probable that it is the one favored and chosen spot for the highest manifestations of life.

La Place, in his "System of the 'World,'" expresses a strong belief that other planets beside the earth are peopled, though not necessarily with beings exactly like ourselves. The devout Newton and his friend Huygens thought that the idea of other worlds being inhabited was consonant with Scripture, if not explicitly revealed. Professor Tyndall, in "Fragments of Science," cautiously expresses his views in these words : "Whether other suns have planetary companions similar to those of our system, is

matter of conjecture only, but probably every thoughtful person believes that there is in space something besides our system on which they shine."

Nature always accomplishes her purpose with the least possible expenditure of energy. Of all the heat radiated from the sun, the earth receives less than one twenty-thousandth of one per cent. "May there not be other planets on which life is maintained by the heat which passes us by?" asks "The New Astronomy."

Buddhism teaches that the inhabited worlds are numberless; where any one will be next born, is determined by his character and attractions. The fact that so many scientific truths recently re-discovered were intuitively discerned by these brooding mystics lends importance to their views on other points.

After one has left this earth he must still, according to modern ideas, remain in the stream of evolution. Zschokke, observing the regular gradation of beings beneath us linked in one continuous chain, the most imperfect connected in some way with a higher, and finally, through innumerable gradations, with the highest, asks,

“Is the continuity of nature suddenly interrupted? Is not the gap between the most perfect man and our conception of the Deity filled with beings superior to ourselves? Feeling the inconceivably great distance that separates my spirit from His, I am ready to believe in the existence of higher natures.”

James Freeman Clarke, in the Second Part of “The Ten Great Religions of the World,” suggests the same idea, declaring that “the great majority of men believe, and have ever believed, in hosts of beings between themselves and the Most High.”

When the glamour is dissipated that once glorified for us the hard realities of earthly life, we have only to cast our glance farther forward to find something worthy of our enthusiasm, in the prospect of meeting upon other spheres beings enough like ourselves for intercourse to be possible between us, but of nobler make, of finer perceptions, who will introduce us to new interests and realize for us the ideal companions we have here vainly sought.

XII

UNIVERSAL IMMORTALITY

“MANY are called, but few are chosen.”

“The analogy from nature on this point,” says Professor Drummond, in “Natural Law in the Spiritual World,” “is striking and solemn. It is an open secret to be read in a hundred analogies from the world around, that, of the millions of possible entrants for advancement in any department of nature, the number ultimately selected for preferment is small. The waste of seed, of pollen, of human lives, are too familiar to be quoted.”

We hear with dismay that the analogies of nature point to this limitation, after following with assenting mind his clear and convincing statements in regard to the clew to spiritual things which is given us in nature. We must look closely at the illustrations.

First, in regard to the seed's falling upon unprofitable ground — what becomes of it? Not

developing at once, it is perhaps picked up by a bird, but nature has provided for its safety by incasing it in a hard covering. It is not digested, and the bird merely transports it to another, it may be to a more congenial, spot.

Second, in regard to the pollen grains? In most cases a plant is not fertilized by its own pollen, but it makes what pollen it can afford to. Some of it is borne by the wind, some carried by insects to other flowers. Some of it is scattered by the way, but I do not call it lost, since I see the bees collecting it as food for their young. Considering the chances against a grain's reaching an ovule to fertilize it, there must be a surplus made to allow for accident and miscarriage. Professor Drummond considers it a failure that a pollen grain should not fertilize an ovule, because pollen grains generally answer that end; but flowers are best fertilized, not by their own pollen, but by that of some other flower, brought by the wind or by insects. If a pollen grain happened to fertilize an ovule on the same plant on which it was produced, it would be an injury to it. It would not develop as well as if it had been left to be fertilized by

a grain brought from another flower. If that special grain had been used instead for beebread, it would have been as well perhaps for the general economy of the universe, and in regard to the grain itself it would have ascended in the scale of life, having risen from vegetable to animal life. Perversion from its normal use would be in this case promotion.

In regard to the charge against Nature, of carelessness and waste in thus flinging about her pollen grains, we will look at Darwin's description of the fertilization of the *Orchis Pyramidalis*. "The upper sepal and two upper petals form a hood protecting the anther and stigmatic surfaces from the weather. The petal which forms the lower lip is developed into a long nectary, in the mouth of which is a trap made of a modified stigma. The nectary has sloping ridges on it which serve as guides that the proboscis should be inserted in the right direction for the pollen to strike the stigmatic surfaces. The trap is partly to keep the viscid matter damp, as when exposed to the air it hardens so that it would not adhere to the proboscis of the moth whose light touch uncovers it.

“A part only of the stigmatic surface is viscid enough for the pollen to adhere to it. *In order to prevent waste* between the insect and the flower, the threads binding the pollen grains are made so delicate as to be ruptured, and a part of the pollen is left when the bee flies off.

“Look also at the precautions taken to prevent waste in the fertilization of the *Spiranthes autumnalis* and other spiked flowers, which mature their lower blossoms first. The bee always alights first on the lowest flowers of a spike. If she alighted first on the summit flower, she would brush off the pollen from the uppermost, last-opened flowers. She might probably then alight on some other blossom near the summit which was not yet fully enough opened in the lip part for fertilization, and the pollen would be wasted. *Nature suffers no such waste.* She has given the bee special directions to go always first to the lowest flower. On the first spike she may effect nothing but to secure some pollen. On the next spike, going first to the lowest flower she finds the lip wide open, and the pollen strikes the stigma. If it has been already fertilized, little or no pollen will be

left on its dried surface, but it will be secured by the next flower in which the stigma is viscid."

Huxley's microscopic examination of coal has revealed another use of spores. "Showers of spores," he says, "kept on falling in the forests for centuries. Perhaps not one in ten million fulfilled its apparent purpose of reproduction." The plants to which he refers were tree-ferns and club-mosses. The spore-cases were covered with resinous matter not easily affected by air or water, and where the unprotected leaves and stems were reduced to a kind of charcoal they remained as a comparatively unaltered and compact residuum. It looks somewhat as if this might have been one end nature had in view for these spores, from the way in which they are protected from decay.

In order to know whether anything has failed to accomplish its purpose, we must know first what that purpose is. Of this fact we are not informed with regard to any person or thing that comes into the world. Second, whether in the æons of time that may still lie before it, fulfilment may not eventually be attained.

Scientific study of the floral organs reveals to us unnumbered instances in which germs fail to develop into what is supposed to be their normal perfection. Aborted leaves become reproductive organs, brilliantly colored petals, protecting scales for the young buds or tendrils to uphold the plant.

In regard to the "waste of human life," I pondered long over this expression; it was unintelligible to me when used by so spiritually-minded a writer. I sometimes hear railroad accidents, shipwrecks, etc., spoken of as attended by great loss of life; but that refers only to the life of the body. I have heard a man spoken of as having lost his life in performing some magnanimous action, for instance as in a telegram I happened just now to read: "Louisville, Ky., October 23, 1889. Vandyke Heyson, eighteen years old, injured in the wreck at Nolan Station, on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, died this afternoon. He lost his life by stopping to assist a passenger."

The result of my reflections has been to convince me, that, considering the character we attribute to our Maker and the interest we be-

lieve Him to take in the work of His hands, it must be that each one dies just at the moment when his welfare will be best promoted by dying; that we can never speak of "an untimely death," nor of the transference from one sphere to another as a waste of life.

Scientifically considered we need only one statement,—*that force is indestructible*. Every one is conscious of possessing within himself a *force* of some kind, and if natural laws prevail in the spiritual world, that force should survive all accident and change.

Does not the common inclination to "say nothing but good of the dead" spring from an intuitive perception that all but the good has perished, dying away as harshness and discord die out of all sounds in the distance, and sweetness and melody only persist?

In Hermetic fable the constant emblem of the soul is water, that, however seemingly contaminated, remains in its essence pure. That which is impure is something else, sediment held in solution, causing it to appear turbid, but no defilement can enter into its integral constitution. The foulest, muddiest water can be distilled,

leaving behind all its impurities, presenting itself without loss, clear and lucent. Every dew-drop, soaring heavenward, rises pure, eliminating itself from all extraneous matter. The purifying forces of the natural world in time remove all stains. Are there not answering spiritual agencies?

Anchises explained to Æneas, who visited him in Elysium, that the crowds he saw waiting on the banks of the stream were to be purged by the winds, cleansed by the watery tide, or purified by fire,

“Till time the inherent stain hath cleansed and left at last
The ethereal reason free from sin’s control —
The fiery essence of the simple soul.”

Even the rude Norsemen believed that in the new birth of the earth, after the destruction of Ragnarök (the day of doom), the frost giants, the inveterate enemies of all, would be admitted to fellowship. And was it not Buddha who refused to set foot in heaven while yet one sinner remained in hell?

One of the oldest of the Hindu systems of theology is the Sankhya philosophy of Kapila, which assumes in every human being an ideal

personality which cannot be touched by the errors of life, but remains always the real self, perfect as when created. The doctrine of Karma implies an acknowledgment of every improvement by which one should be entitled to another birth. All, even the most incapable, have learned something in this school of life, and every one for at least one deed, done between the day of his birth and the day of his death, must feel the approval of conscience. One step farther onward in his path of progress his earthly experience should at least lift him.

Early missionaries to the Chinese found it impossible to explain to them the mediatorial office of Christ. Into their simple, innocent minds the idea could not enter that a man might so far break away from the right path that it would be impossible for him to return.

One of the most puzzling of theological problems has always been to reconcile mercy and justice,—forgiveness of sins with inflexibility of law. It may be that no other punishment will be needed than a clearer vision revealing to us that in as far as we deviated from laws of right we separated ourselves from what we

now recognize as the object of our heart's desire.

In studying the nature of a sinner, which we all have opportunity to do at first hand, we realize how blindly some steps are taken which nothing would have induced us to take if we could have foreseen their tendency.

Œdipus in the old tragedy of Sophocles strikes out his own eyes, when his unknowingly-committed crimes are revealed to him.

If we were as charitable toward others as we are toward ourselves, we should see so many excuses for them that we should find it impossible to regard any one as such a monster of iniquity that we could say of him, as does the Rev. J. J. Murphy in "The Scientific Basis of Faith," "I believe that there are those for whom the only salvation possible is the extinction of consciousness and annihilation of being, and that the analogies of nature point to this consummation."

XIII

CREMATION AND BURIAL

I OFTEN visit the ancient graveyard that lies near my home, and study out the inscriptions on the slate headstones. They are generally of a gloomy character and illustrated with death's-head and crossed-bones. As I pass from it to the pleasant hillside, blue with lupine and white daisies, where all the more recent interments are made, I feel that ideas of death must have changed, yet funeral ceremonies are as dreary as ever. A procession passed my door this bright May morning, having even the horses draped in black, pall-bearers with long black streamers, and deeply shrouded mourners. The gloom of the Middle Ages, when the *Dies Irae* was the favorite hymn, seemed still to linger about it. All along beside the road they travelled, buttercups glistened in the meadows, and in the fresh spring breeze the shimmering light swept across the grassy waves. God smiled on

the world and on the dark pageant that celebrated a spirit's return to Him.

There is little revolt against these ancient conventionalities, yet we occasionally hear of it, as when the late Mr. Dwinelle of San Francisco begged to be carried to his grave on some other vehicle than a hearse, and directed that no women should be present at his funeral, — perhaps from unpleasant associations with the mourning women employed in ancient times.

Millet, the painter of French peasant life, expressed a wish that no printed announcements of his death should be sent out, but that he should be buried as a farmer, and that a neighbor should go from house to house telling of his death and the time of his burial, according to the custom of the country people.

If we could rid ourselves of all the gloomy associations not necessarily connected with death, but which in time have gathered about it, we should not shrink so much from the mention or thought of it. After the desolate funeral ceremonies comes the imprisonment of the grave. To return at once to the elements, to share the life of the soaring vapors, of the whirling dust clouds, would be better.

Heine prayed for a little window in his coffin-lid from which to see the swallows come back in the spring. The ancient Iroquois Indians had an outlet to the grave for the spirit to creep out.

The disposition of the dead in former times, and among more childlike people, suggested the idea that life in some form lay still before them. "When you bury me," says Rabbi Jeremiah, in the Talmud, "put shoes on my feet, and give me a staff in my hand, that when the Messiah comes, I may be ready." "The old Norse warriors were buried in armor, sometimes seated on horseback and facing the enemy's country."¹

In the mouth of the old Greek lay the *obolus* for Charon's toll to ferry him across the Styx. In his hand was the cake of rice and honey for Cerberus.

Beside every Egyptian mummy lay a papyrus scroll, taken from the Book of the Dead, containing the prayers to be addressed to each god whose gate he must pass as he followed the setting sun in his journey to Amenthe, the Land of Judgment. The Gnostics also provided the dead with prayers inscribed on leaden

¹ Tylor's *Primitive Culture*.

scrolls to be addressed to the genii of the planets, the constellations, and the moon, begging leave to pass through their domains.

In the fearful ancient belief, great difficulties beset the dead. The bridge *al Sirat* was thinner than a hair, sharper than a razor, hotter than flame. No soul could pass from earth to the Mohammedan paradise without crossing it, and it lay directly over hell. But even that is better than the annihilation of modern rationalism.

Some explanation the mind must offer to itself of the phenomena of life and death.

In primitive times, when a man saw before him one in whom life seemed to have ceased, he yet repudiated the idea that it could be so. Science reveals to us so many instances in which appearances are contrary to fact, it should be easier for us than it was for him to discard the evidence of the senses.

Many people shrink with superstitious fear from any other mode of disposing of the dead than by burial. The Bible is sometimes quoted as authority on this point, in the words spoken to Adam : "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ; for

out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”¹ Yet the Jews were sometimes burned, as in the case of Saul and his sons.²

The Parsees deposited their dead in the “Tower of Silence,” under the open sky.

According to Tacitus, it was the custom of the Northern Germans and Danes to burn the bodies of princes and chiefs. Cremation also prevailed among the Celts, Gauls, Scandinavians, Hindus, Greeks, Romans, and North American Indians. There are few people that have not practised it.

Sir Thomas Browne says that fire being the master principle in the composition of the body, it seemed most natural to these ancient people that the body should be restored to it, in the end.

A tradition of the California Indians declares that the first Indians were coyotes, and that they began to change gradually into men, being at first only imperfect men, when they adopted the custom of burning their dead instead of burying them, attributing the transformation to the ennobling effect of fire.

¹ Gen. iii. 19.

² Sam. xxxi. 12.

There are not necessarily any unpleasant associations with the idea of cremation. None would enter our minds if we regarded the body only as discarded vesture of the spirit. To many ancient people these rites were cheerful.

Homer's account of the funeral of Patroclus describes his body as borne by his peers to the funeral pile, covered with the shorn curls of his friends; Achilles' golden hair lay in his hands. The pyre on which it was deposited was laid of "the high-haired oaks," and the solemn flame all night guarded and replenished with oil and honey, Achilles pouring wine on the earth beside it, and calling on the soul of Patroclus. As the day-star rose, the fire was quenched, and careful search made for the bones, which were wrapped in soft folds of linen, and deposited in an urn, and buried. The next day games were celebrated, horse and chariot and foot races, wrestling, and strife with darts; the Greeks never doubting that the dead shared still the love of the living for chariots, and arms, and shining steeds. Prizes also were distributed as funeral mementos, — gifts from Patroclus.

The old Hindu directions for funeral service

called the relatives to assemble "in fair attire, and with no grief or tears." When the funeral pile was lighted, this address to the spirit was chanted :—

"Go to thy loving mother—home to Earth.
With wide-spread arms and blessing-bringing hands
She takes the pious to her kindly breast
As 'twere a maiden's bosom soft as wool,
And holds him safe from danger's threatening edge.
Open thy arms, O Earth, do him no harm,
Receive him gently with a loving kiss,
And wrap him round, O Earth, as when a babe
His mother in her garment folds to rest!"

Nature is more powerful than we are, and if we seal up the dead body in an air-tight coffin we cannot change her course with it. When we investigate a little, and see the beneficent working of natural laws, we feel more ready to restore it at once to their action, and not attempt any hinderance of changes that inevitably occur sooner or later.

XIV

OUR RELATION TO THE DEAD

THE sympathetic Sir Thomas Browne once said that, although he felt that his theology would not sustain him in it, he could hardly help uttering a prayer for the soul of the dying, whenever he heard the passing bell. It is the common impulse and longing to follow still with our love and care those who have left us. Do they not yearn toward us? More than one philosophic writer has declared that close thought always gives a shock to our faith in immortality. This incredulity, it seems to me, is due more to the silence of the dead than to any other cause. We have such faith in their continued love if they are still in existence, would they not some time, in some way, succeed in making themselves known? How energetically and persistently they would have striven, if separated from us anywhere on earth, to find us again! Facts certainly seem to be against us

in attempting to convince ourselves that they have not wholly died, yet the heart clings to the belief, though it can give answer only to the reason that things may not be as they seem.

The ancient Romans often buried their dead within or very near their dwellings, that they might still be able to guard and help them. Plato says, "Let men fear in the first place the gods above, next the souls of the dead;" and to the childlike Chinese the dead are more important in their influence than the living. It is more necessary to conciliate them, lest their enmity should work one ill. The question being once asked of Confucius, whether the ancestors whom he revered knew anything of his piety, he answered, "Continue, my beloved, to render to thy ancestors due honors, act as if thou hadst them for witnesses of all thy actions, and seek not to know more."

The North American Indians believe that the spirits of the old and the very young, not being able to take the long journey to the Happy Hunting Grounds, still linger round the old dwelling. It seems to be a universal instinct,

notwithstanding their giving us no token, to recognize them still in our heart of hearts as existing and as conscious of us. Why then this silence? How can they themselves be reconciled to it? Cato, in giving an account of his laying the body of his beloved son on the funeral pyre, says, "His soul not deserting me, but often looking back, doubtless departed to those regions to which he saw that I myself would come."

What a different thing it would be to us to wait for them, if we knew positively that we ever should see them again, still more if we knew just *when* it would be! It may be that they know this in regard to us, and what, to us, is the fearful apprehension is to them the blissful certainty of our death.

Looking at the cypress tree beside my window, I noticed one morning that the sun fell upon it differently from usual. Perhaps I had never happened to look at it at just that hour before. As the light struck through the labyrinth of its dark branches I saw running between them in all directions fine silky lines never before visible. As the light of that new world dawns upon them they may become conscious of safeguards placed

around us of which we are ignorant, and see that—

“Not one misstep will Heaven e’er let us make
On this sharp, swaying, perilous bridge of life,”¹

and their minds are at rest with regard to us.

In the first agony of our grief we could hardly help feeling as if all relation to them were ended. After a time it begins to seem as if it were not wholly so, but rather as if we had entered into a new relation to which it has taken some little time to adapt ourselves. We reflect upon what is probably their employment. It is natural to suppose that, if their choice has anything to do with determining it, it would have some connection with those in whom all their interests have hitherto centred. We say that they give no sign. It must be that others as well as I, in observing one who has lost a dear friend, have sometimes noticed changes in life, character and appearance, that we can hardly help attributing to the moulding hand of one we have spoken of as dead.

Comte, generally regarded as an atheist, after the death of his dearest friend, prayed to her

¹ Leopold Schafer.

and invoked her continual help. We all form our idea of what God must be, chiefly from what we have known on earth. Whoever has most awakened our love and reverence must represent Him.

John Stuart Mill, after the death of his wife, writes, "My objects in life are solely those which were hers, my pursuits and occupations those in which she shared or sympathized and which are indissolubly connected with her. . . . Her memory is to me a religion, her approbation is the standard by which, summing up as it does all worthiness, I endeavor to regulate my life."

Tolstoi, in speaking of the death of his brother, says that he recognizes him after death in just the same way that he knew him in his fleshly existence. He feels the power of his life still. "It has not suffered diminution, has not even remained the same. It has increased, and acts more powerfully upon me than before." A sort of *aura* that seemed always about him on earth, in which his personality manifested itself, remains still as his identification. And in regard to the ended earthly relation, he says, "It is as if I before gazed upon a reflecting surface

which showed me how he held me ; the reflecting surface has grown dim, I no longer see how he holds me, but I feel in all my being that he still holds me, as before, and hence that he exists."

It seems from the part they take in our lives as if our relation to the dead were as strong and real as any relation we hold to the living. It greatly enriches our lives to feel that it is so, that we can still keep faith with them, and instead of fearing that we shall never know anything more of them, dare trust to our intuitive belief, to the hints given in the working of natural laws, and to the justice and kindness of Heaven, to restore them to us.

Do we fear lest our human consciousness and identity should be lost in the overwhelming vicissitude of death? "The qualities of matter," says Du Bois Reymond, "are eternal and inalienable." Can this be true of matter, and be questioned in regard to spirit? Who can believe that the individuality so toilsomely evolved in all our varied experiences will ever be merged in one great sea of being by One to whom individuality is so precious that He never

makes even two grass-blades or two leaves on a tree precisely alike?

We cannot possibly imagine how we shall ever find each other again. There are many other things that we cannot imagine; where we were before we came here, how we came, or by what divine arrangements those whose loss we so mourn were once associated with us.

Dissolve any compound, and afterward let crystallization set in; watch how like atoms seek each other out and unite again — under what guidance?

Max Müller defines the central idea of the Christian religion as “Love for the Living; *Love for the Dead*; Living and Undying Love.”

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